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THE
LADY OF THE ROSE,

AND

OTHER POEMS.

BY

THOMAS MEAD.
(COMEDIAN.)

1881.

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MY MOTIVE.

I HOPE not for the bays of the grand illustrious masters,
Whose fames stand, like the mountains, 'gainst the frittering of time,
Outlasting and surmounting all mutations and disasters;
Through the soft'ning misty distance piercing only more sublime :
As they glimmered in the morning light of earliest dawning fame,
Their eminences met the beams of glory's rising light,
So must they radiantly receive the last expiring flame,
Ere poesy's and honour's sun sinks to barbaric night.

Though less in towering grandeur, yet others rise gigantic
Above the plain of ages, clad in beauty and in might ;
Philosophy's cool bowers, and wild cataracts romantic,
Soft contemplation's forests, and parterres of flowery light ;
With dorn and caverned horrors, and fair votive temple-piles,
Bland melancholy valleys, and heaven reflective lakes,
Embosomed in love's foliage, and begemmed with thoughtful isles,
And Fancy's myriad creatures giving life to all their brakes.

Shut out from these, where turn'd I ? To the hills of opulence,
Where the rich *pampré* glitters, and the lush wine-fruit clusters,
And life is vivid, jocund, with a keen and lusty sense
Of piercing wit, and bumping jest, or satire's flashing lusters,
And humour's mobile quaintness, that disarms all sober sway,
Lords o'er the laughing circle like a potent mountebank,
And wisdom speaks like folly, in a strange inverted way,
And disproves what it believes in by some sleight-back-handed crank ?

I cannot hope a holding with the sprightly, caustic race,
Upon the sunny hill-side, where the smile is ever seen :
I'd be content to nestle in some lowly, sheltered place,
Yet leave a simple cairn-pile that might tell I once had been
Only a little higher than the murky tidal line ;
Washed by the world's foul water, in its slimy cbb and flow,
That happily hereafter a beloved one of mine
May feel some little pride to point with filial pleasure to ;

And if all other readers save that one should slight my lays,
Or the imprinted pages be to all but her unknown,
Her lips perhaps may tremble forth some sweet posthumous praise,
And in her woman's soul she'll read, and comprehend my own ;
For then mine may have cast the burden of its earthly vest,
And mem'ry of me only be a dim and misty wreath ;
Here may she find her father's mental semblances impressed,
And I may seem to speak and to commune with her in death.

Then in her heart's recesses, in its sacred solitude,
She may enshrine my image round with sweet religious care,

Where, when no jostling subjects of the passing world obtrude,
To turn and give the tribute of affection's offering there ;

To call from dusky mem'ry some fond act or tender tone,
Or to repeat some passage of a deeper-hearted sense ;

To make all thoughts of goodness that are written here her own:
That is the fame I covet, that my hope and recompense.

THE LADY OF THE ROSE.

I WRITE my thoughts : few of my fellows can :
Labour, and mirth, and sleep, making their round
Of life unvaried ; save when malady—
Alas ! too frequently—its shadow casts
O'er the else careless few abiding round.
How I the art to read and write possess
I will explain. Before my father died,
In my eighth year, a stranger came to dwell
Beneath our roof ; there was a mystery
Hung over him ; my father gave a charge
I should not speak of him ; some State turmoil
Then vexed the land, and he—I since have learned—
A patriot on the failing cause, proscribed,
My father sheltered, though at grievous risk.
Till then a book or pen to me was strange :
I saw him read, and my young wonder woke :
He wrote, and I felt awe : but he was one
Whom children quickly loved ; 'tis ever so
With master minds—and he was of that stamp.
When he explained to me how reading fed
The soul, as bread the body ; that to write
Was to set down the flashing, fleeting thought
Which memory failed to record ; though so young
The burning glow of some desire unknown
Woke in me, and found words of longing wish
That I could read and write.

Through the dim mist
Of childish memory I see the smile
That lit his features up when he inquired
If I would learn from him ? Oh yes ! Oh yes !
A bond was made between the man and child
No time can sever ; I became his toy—
He my loved playmate, and our cherished sport

The goodly game of letters : eye and hand
 In eager diligence no tiring knew
 Till I could tell, and join the pieces fair
 Of the great puzzle he made clear to me.
 How short the days for work !—the eves for chat !
 And oh ! the grief when his departure came !
 Equalled alone by that the tidings gave
 That reached us of his death ; for as he lived
 His country's friend, her martyr, too, he died.
 Oh ! could the means he lent me give the power,
 How would I place his name in living song,
 As he has placed it on Right's martyr-roll !
 In this lone region books are scarce ; the few
 He left me, o'er and o'er I have re-read,
 Till my heart knows them : with stray colporteurs
 I've strained my scant resources to pick up
 A volume here and there ; but as a rule
 Their stock's but spare, and of a sorry sort :
 But there are other books in which I read,
 Which feed my fancy and awaken thought.
 The hills, the valleys, and the mountain streams,
 The audible mysterious voice of winds,
 The answering echoes of the solitudes,
 The flitting sunlight over clouds and cliffs,
 The rolling shadows o'er the waving woods,
 The endless change, renewal, and decay
 In things inanimate ; the leaves, the flowers,
 In sweet succession, spring, and bud, and bloom :
 But in the things of life that soar and crawl,
 Swim, climb, and burrow, prowl or ruminate—
 Links all of one great mighty magic chain,
 Where Nature's voice and Instinct's dictates sway—
 These have I learned to watch and ponder on,
 With no default to labour's urgent claim,
 That it hath grown a habit rest to me—
 As I began by saying—to write down
 Thoughts that to better or to wiser life
 May point an upward track.

This mood of mine
 Hath earned for me among our peasant train
 Of rude and lusty life, a dreamer's name :
 Yet there's another style, which, part in jest—
 And yet I fain would hope as much in love—
 They've dubbed me with. And oh how weak we are !
 For let me own a weakness in me lives
 That pleasure finds ; that in the narrow space
 I move in no worse name is chosen out
 To nickname me. For that at festivals
 And friendly gatherings—be they bridal feasts,
 Vintage, for bringings home, or christenings—
 I am wont to some old strain new words to set,
 And sing to them, to suit the merry time.

For this, "the Singer" have they titled me.
 Their homely compliment would signify—
 Shall I say, poet? Yes, my poor bald rhyme,
 And jingle of familiar local phrase,
 They deem to merit it; 'tis true, I strive
 In words and voice to sing as heart to heart,
 And on those senses, that with tender touch,
 Vibrate with thrill the most emotional,
 In my own thoughts, to waken thought in them;
 When singing of the old like age to sing,
 And stir the pleasant memories of life:
 To maiden ears to whisper love's sweet hope,
 To youth some known desire which manhood crowns,
 To parents some soft touch of childhood's charm;
 To bid the tear, the sigh, the flush, the smile,
 To rise responsive to the plaintive theme,
 Or the laugh echo to the mirthful turn.
 But poet! Is this poetry? Alas!
 I know not. Yet at times within me stirs
 A restless and unconquerable need
 To pen the burden-thoughts that will be eased;
 That, like a restless, caged, and fluttering bird,
 Pine for the open space.

Thus even now
 A thought, a memory, presses on my mind,
 As it hath often done; but never yet
 Without attending fear that I should mar
 The bloom and fragrance of the gracious flower
 That blossomed in my heart, and lived with me,
 A thing of worship and of poesy,
 But given to the winds might fade and be
 A treasure wantonly cast out to die.
 Its germ—as on the providential winds
 Are borne the seeds to robe some new-born isle,
 Fresh lifted from the ooze, with greenery
 And bloom, and fruitage—by the ministry,
 Of sweet propitious guidance piloted,
 In my unlaboured soul took racinage,
 And, like a thing of life and holiness,
 Woke in me psalms of secret worshipping,
 Due only to my mother and the Lord.
 Was it a shame, or latent jealousy,
 That closed my boyish lips from whispering
 Her name—the only one we knew her by—
 The Lady of the Rose? 'Twas one or both;
 For when my mother, as she often would,
 Recalled her visitation to our cot,
 I have felt the tremor and the burning flush
 Shoot through my veins, and with the subterfuge
 Of heedlessness—oh, how untrue!—I stole
 Forth from her presence to the silent hills,
 Where I had made my shrine, and where my soul

Bent to her image, with devotion such
As passion never knew.

Who was this saint
My heart had calendared? I cannot tell.
Like an administering sprite she came,
Leaving the radiance of her love behind,
And disappeared and left no clue to us
To follow with our blessings. Of what land?
We knew as little: though she spake our tongue,
The accent of some other land did blend
Strangely, but sweetly, with it, like the strains
Of two soft instruments that strike the ear
With unaccustomed harmony and grace.
What of the land! Her merit none should claim
Could I reveal it; to the world belongs
The odour of her goodness. We alone
Claim the monopoly of gratitude,
And would not share it.

Thus the story runs,
Which should be read, not so much through my words,
As through my heart, if without words 't could speak.
In my ninth year my father's sudden death
Left us in bitter strait: for civil strife
Had driven labour from its wonted task,
And left a trail of death and misery
In blasted vineyards and untended fields;
Through all the province, industry stood blank
With idly-folded arms, staring at want
And empty garners; and, to make
A direr reckoning, the calamity
Of pestilence—the triple woe that waits
To glean the deathfield, war, and famine sheer—
Raged in the circle. From the campanell
The deathbell rang its now familiar note,
And each home had its mourners for some dead.
Ours was not spared. Oh! ne'er shall I forget
My mother's trials: first with poverty;
Then, one by one, as sickness seized upon
Two sisters, each my younger, and our pet
My little baby brother—a sweet child
Whose face and disposition bore the seal
Of paradise, an angel sent to bless,
And to be blessed, with love. Even the pangs
Of the sharp fever lacked the power to quench
The cherub sweetness in the patient boy;
For he lay patting with his feeble hands
His sister's cheeks, as they unconscious pined,
In touching sympathy, which seemed to ask
Help for them, from my mother and myself,
Whom heaven had spared to tend them.

Days and nights
Of restless watching, need, and anxious thoughts

Had hollowed out my mother's cheeks, and lent
 A spectral glimmering to her haggard eyes.
 I sat by the pale embers watching her,
 Revolving the great dread of loneliness
 That threatened me in loss of all so dear :
 The child now slept ; and from the bed, where they
 All three seemed drifting down to death's dark sea,
 Low, broken sighs of pain came throbbing forth
 Into the stillness of the darkened room.
 I saw my mother struggle with the weight
 Of Nature's chain ; at last, o'erspent, subside
 Into a fitful doze ; next, to a deep,
 Involuntary slumber, with the dim lamp-flame
 Behind the curtain, lending her thin face
 A shadowing of death, rather than sleep.
 There was a look on it that called to mind
 My father's features as he lay in death ;
 And thought of him, and so much neighbouring death,
 Woke in my young mind a cold, nameless dread,
 Which stole upon me, till my trembling frame
 Made the stool rattle I was seated on.
 I closed my eyes, and, in my outspread palms,
 Buried them tightly on my knees, and wept.
 The shadow of bereavement clouded me
 With an unspeakable presentiment
 Of fresh calamity impending o'er
 My young existence ; and my mother's life
 Of love and watchful, self-denying care
 Passed like a pageant through my troubled mind,
 Informing me of all I had to dread
 In thought of losing her, or to repay,
 Might she be spared to bless me still with love.
 Clinging to her, my yearning heart by times
 Dwelt on the little sufferers, languishing
 In their unconscious peril ; and the thought
 Of our past childish, innocent delights—
 Their prattle, and dependent, infant trust
 In me, the eldest, that had grafted them
 In my affection so—the wrench of death
 That plucked at them seemed threat'ning me as well.
 Th' unuttered prayer that aspired in thought
 Of " life for them, or death for me as well,"
 Went up in anguish to the Lord of Life,
 Whom o'er the altar I had pictured seen
 Blessing the children ; for no thought of joy
 Found harbour in my heart apart from them,
 Who had been all that I had ever known
 Of life, or love, or joy, now left to me.
 My soul was sore—yea, desolately sad :
 My stifled sobs, my mother's pain-drawn breath,
 The children's fevered moanings, broke alone
 The death-like silence, when a hand was laid

Tenderly on my shoulder, and a voice—
 So soft, and pitiful, and sweetly kind—
 Broke on my tribulation, like a balm
 Of magic virtue dropped on smarting wound.
 I raised my head in silent wonderment,
 And lo ! a vision—such it seemed to me—
 Between the doubtful and divided light
 Of sickly lamp and smouldering billet's gleam,
 A female form, in white and flowing robes,
 Her veil thrown back sufficiently to show
 A face of beauty—stranger to our clime,
 And, as I thought, to earth, so angel-like,
 My then impression, and since memory
 Conceived, and still imprints it on my mind.
 Her smile of pity, and soft, dove-like glance,
 Disarmed all fear in me, but lit within
 A reverence all new and undefined.
 As on the purest snow a stain of blood
 Arrests the sight, so on her spotless breast
 One glowing, full-blown, Provence Rose reposed,
 A beauteous foil to her fair lily hue.
 One taper finger on her lip was pressed,
 To signal me to silence, as her eye
 Glanced towards the sleepers with an anxious look.
 Placing a panier down, she stept
 Noiselessly towards the pallet, bent her down,
 Taking the children's hands within her own ;
 Feeling their pulses, one by one, with care,
 Not to disturb them ; then returned to me,
 Sat down, and took me, in her gentle arms,
 Parted my clustering locks from off my brow,
 And pressed a kiss upon it, questioning,
 In softest whispers, of our misery.
 Spell bound, I answered all in briefest words,
 Nor sought to unclasp me from her loving strain.
 As hours passed by, and the deep midnight chime
 Had been succeeded by—I know not now
 How many of the morns—no thought of sleep,
 No sense of weariness, stole over me.
 A holy presence bound me in its thrall,
 And seemed to fill me with a soft content
 And growing hopefulness, as she distilled
 The essence of her virtuous soul, to teach
 The love and duty that should guide a son.
 The first faint grey of morn began to blend
 With the lamp's sickly ray, when, with a cry,
 Our picciolo woke. At his sharp plaint
 My mother started from her heavy sleep ;
 But, ere she could recall her waking thoughts,
 The Lady of the Rose had reached her side,
 And led her wondering to the hearth-place seat,
 Brought forth a flaccette from the panier,

And poured for her a draught, which seemed to bear
 New life within it ; with a gesture mild,
 Enforcing her to quietude. The while
 She of the Rosa brought the infant forth,
 Who stared with wonder, and held out its arms
 Towards its mother, till its eye was caught
 With the bright rose upon the snowy breast ;
 And the sweet magic of the silvery voice
 Won his young ear ; then a confiding smile
 Stole o'er his visage as she sat to nurse,
 And to administer some cordial rare
 She had brought with her ; and, observing he
 Was caught with the bright colour of the flower,
 She gave it him. Just then my sisters woke.
 The Lady rose, and held the infant forth
 Towards his mother ; but he clung to her,
 And only by persuasive words from her,
 Pleading his sisters' suffering, would he
 Be parted from her. Then she went to them,
 And soothed them, and administered a draught
 That lulled them to a soft, unbroken rest ;
 Then came and took the babe again, and sat
 Rocking him tenderly—the rose between
 His wasted fingers—till his eyelids closed ;
 While the soft, regular, and gentle breath
 Told the sweet tale of rest. She softly rose,
 Noiselessly crossed the room, and laid him down
 In gentle slumber, that bright glowing rose
 Beside his whitened cheeks. Then did she bend,
 And gently kissed them all ; and brought the lamp,
 And placed it on the table ; and sat down,
 And wrote upon some tablets, which she gave
 To my poor mother with inquiring look,
 Who shook her head, and passed the leaves to me.
 That was my time of triumph and of pride,
 As, in low tone, but with distinctness clear,
 I read directions how some medicines,
 With varying coloured labels, should be used,
 And what the treatment for our invalids.
 When I had ended she arose to go.
 Clasp ing my mother's hand, she bade her hope ;
 And as she spoke her eye was fixed on me
 With a blest, hopeful, and prophetic glance,
 As her fair fingers wanted with the curls
 That, with untended wildness, straggled o'er
 My throbbing temples. Then she bent and laid
 A kiss upon my forehead, and I marked,
 For my eye could not quit her, that a tear
 Brightened the softness of her angel eye.
 She turned to leave us. As she reached the door
 A sudden impulse seized me, and I ran
 And clutched her robe, and stammered out,

"Tell us what name you bear, oh, lady pray !
That we may in our prayers remember it.
And where, too, may we come in gratitude
To speak the thanks that now we cannot speak ?"
She turned and smiled. "We may not meet again,"
She said. "But would you sometimes speak of me,
Let it be as the Lady of the Rose."

The sequel needs few words. Our dear ones lived.
A brighter presence scared death's angel forth.
A purse by pious stealth she left behind,
Lined with such golden coin as served to pass
The bitter time of our necessity.
The rose she left us was a pledge and sign
Of health and bloom, and cheerfulness restored ;
But more of that unfading gratitude,
Whose perfume is undying, whose fair hue
No time can tarnish, nor misfortune dim.
We never saw nor heard of her again.
From whence she came, or where departed she,
I nothing know. Let the sweet mystery,
With all its aerial indistinctness dwell,
To wreath around the Lady of the Rose.

THE TWO WATCHERS.

FITFULLY, the ivy spray
Taps upon the lattice pane ;
With a sharp, discordant lay,
Shrieks the rusty weather-vane,
Swaying fletfully and shrill
On the turret, murk and still,
That crowns the dreary pine-clad hill.
Darkly streams the ærial tide,
Riftless, evenly, aboon,
Through the chilly welkin wide ;
Faintly the perturbed moan
Of the rain-repleted lynn
Hums its melancholy din,
Its devious rocky channel in :
A biting blast of humid cold,
And nipping wind, with eager sough,
Is traversing the restless wold,
That waves and billows to and fro ;
While dimly gleams one debile light,
Like a spent beacon of the night,
Timidly from the castled height.

O'er the tree-tops, o'er the stream,
 To the dark opposing height,
 Trembles that weak taper's beam,
 Struggling through the cloudy night ;
 To where the solitary shade,
 On the hill's pent, is deeper made,
 In the lone pine-wood's colonnade ;
 Through which, as on a mystic lyre,
 A dismal swell, and cadence moans,
 Now faintly sad, now mounting higher,
 From shrill to diapason drones :
 Contortion and wild restlessness
 Seem all surroundings to possess,
 Beneath the wind's unfriendly stress :
 The pine cones, rattling, fall around,
 The rank-leaved dock flaps to the blast,
 The dancing splints spin o'er the ground,
 And chase the sear-leaves hurrying past ;
 While reed, and herb, and branch, and bole,
 And shrub, in one continuous roll,
 Are fretted by the wind's control.

Yet, upon that woodland peak,
 Stands a watcher, lone and mute,
 Senseless of the weather's wreak,
 Mindless of the gathering bruit ;
 For his thoughts intently ponder—
 Burdened thoughts, that press him under,
 Crushing weights of grief and wonder ;
 And the fire and flood within
 Waste and drown his heart by turn,
 Prompting bitterness and sin ;
 Lessons hard and sad to learn ;
 Hard as to unlearn old love,
 To damp the fires that melt and move,
 And for the vulture change the dove,
 That tenderly he lodged and nursed,
 Till it a cherished fondling grew,
 To welcome now a tenant cursed,
 And change old love for hatred new :
 Impossible the middle course
 To one all tenderness or force ;
 Naught than indifference could be worse.

That flick'ring spark o'er the ravine,
 That faint gem, in the mournful cope
 Of the dusk hill, though dimly seen,
 Is daylight to his darkened hope.
 Why burns that taper-light the last,
 Through all the pile so wide and vast,
 Though midnight's hour has long gone past ?
 Can she, so heartless, dare to brave
 The silent hour, the certain thought,

That hollow faith and treachery have
 A trusting soul to madness wrought ?
 Or doth her conscious terror shun
 The phantom-haunted sleep of one
 Who hath betrayed whom she hath won ?
 Perhaps some retrospective thought,
 Or late experience, wakes a fear
 That empty grandeur that is bought
 By perjury is over-dear ;
 Or woman's unswayed instinct may
 Deduce a surer, sweeter way
 To happiness than false display.

Wakeful lady ! carefully
 On the future fix thy gaze ;
 Glance not backward, fearfully,
 Through thy bygone, stainless days :
 Memory is certain shame,
 Thought must traverse fields of flame,
 Making present triumph tame ;
 Each remembered loveliness
 Will be senti'd by a ghost ;
 Crude compunction and distress
 Robe each thing of beauty lost ;
 What was bloom and freshness then
 Shall be blight and haggard when
 Scrutinised with present ken ;
 The voices sweet of former years,
 That anthemed their melodious strains,
 Shall jangle harshly in thine ears,
 And strike inevitable pains
 At thy sleeping, at thy waking,
 Ever spirit-discord making,
 Through each softer measure breaking.

Pilgrim from the Changeful Main,
 Here is strange mutation too !
 Seek *her* wiles and whims again ;
She's the fittest bride for you :
 Thou art out-bid in Beauty's mart ;
 Thy travail, soul, and body's smart
 Are foiled by vanity and art ;
 That you promised others paid ;
 You waited both on time and chance ;
 He had fortune ready made,
 And title's tinsel elegance ;
 Yet your defeat is food for mirth,
 For she was earthy of the earth,
 A picture of the smallest worth,
 Whose gorgeous frame, attractive, made
 Unskilled credulity admire :
 Thou art not, but *he is*, betrayed,
 And of the cheat will quickly tire ;

Or, if he still be cheated on,
Believing he a prize doth own,
She's only fit for such a one.

Captain of the "Golden Heart,"
Mourn not at thy broken chain;
Silently in scorn depart—

She's but worthy of disdain;
Thou art blessed in her deceit;
Victory is in defeat;
Honour lives in fair retreat.
Flatter not her little pride

By thy anger, nor thy grief;
Broaden the abyssmal void,
And in absence seek relief;
Balm thy wounded spirit's pain—
Hers was void, and vile, and vain;
Look upon the world again.

She to mate thee was unfitted;
With such shallow nature knitted
Thou wert only to be piti'd.

Thy trammel is a spider's thread,
Which cannot long thy vigour bind;

Its filmy mesh demolish'd
With manumitted heart and mind;
Thy path of honour open lies,
Graced with according sympathies,
To aid thy upward destinies.

THE PRIEST OF ARICIA.

NOTE.—"The priest of the Temple was always a fugitive, and the murderer of his predecessor; and went always armed with a dagger, to prevent whatever attempts might be made upon his life by one who wished to be his successor."—*Brown's Classical Dictionary*.

SILENCE profoundly reigns in earth and sky,
For eve has reached its mean, when things of day,
Obeying nature's need, have sunk to rest;
While those of night, deterred by some faint light,
Pendulous o'er the earth, yet not upon 't,
Still lurk within their solemn sanctu'ries.
No breath through all the grove disturbs a leaf;
Motion and sound seem dead, and nature's trance,
Now at its deepest, strikes a solemn awe,

At the conjecture, what a blank would reign
 Should sound and motion never wake again.
 Yet a transition dimly grows on all,
 And momentarily each object wears
 A ghostlier aspect ; as upon the face
 Of one just dead, the mortal greyness steals.
 A sense of chillness stealthily comes on
 With the invasive night, and solitude
 Begins to waken in the lonely one
 That feeling, though he shames to call it fear,
 By any other name would be miscalled.
 Yet 'tis a holy precinct, 'tis the grove
 Of the inviolable goddess' fane.
 Wherever burns the unquenched vestal lamp
 On chaste Diana's altar.

One sad guard

Within the bounding of that silent wood
 Holds fearful watch and ward ; the devotee
 Who, by red-handed slaughter, wrested from
 His predecessor in the envied task,
 The lone distinction that he hath attained.
 The sole companion, ever by his side,
 Must be the phantom that his dagger raised.
 By day each floweret, peering from the shade,
 By night each firefly flitting through the boughs,
 Must take a meaning like a dying eye,
 And speak to his remembrance :
 The murmur of the sad Egeria's fount
 Must have a deathly, moaning voice for him
 Like his slain victim's death-sob ; and the flow
 Of its lymph-wave must image to his mind
 The blood that followed where the knife was driven ;
 In the fine beaded spray, that falls around,
 He must behold the death-sweat ooze again ;
 And the dead presence, which he cannot lay,
 Grows still more hideous from persistency :
 The past, like to a robe of flame, must scorch ;
 The future like a shroud of lead must weigh :
 For the alarum, fear, keeps ceaseless din.
 What he hath won, others aspire to win ;
 The stealth he practised others can employ ;
 The vigilance he foiled may fail in him :
 The curse is, that he knows not when, or how,
 Nor from what quarter, to expect the blow :
 The rustling of a wild bird through the leaves,
 The crash of some scar branch, rent by the wind
 From off its parent stem, must fill his soul
 With endless restlessness ; while every moan
 Of early morning's or deep midnight's breath
 The mournful cypresses, and yews among,
 Must wake an echo in his brooding soul,
 Repeating past imaginings, or rouse

New apprehensions for the coming time.
 Lo ! where he stands, so motionless and wrapt,
 You'd say a statue had been planted there,
 To mock the solitude with show of life,
 Only to make it deeper ; like a shadow
 Amidst surrounding shades of derner hue.
 His task to feed the votive flame is o'er,
 The temple purified, the evening rite
 Performed with dull, precise, habitual care ;
 And now that harder task of all, to brook
 The anguish and the weariness of thoughts.
 That waste the body and inflame the mind
 With their incessant and corrosive stings,
 Is now his sole employ and penalty.
 He hath abandoned the relief which first
 He found in open utterance of his dreams ;
 For day by day his voice acquired a tone
 So hollow and unearthly, that its sound
 So jarred upon him, suddenly he paused
 In a half-finished sentence, and thought out
 The rest of it in silence. He hath since
 Abandoned speech, as one whose sharp-edged blade,
 The sheath being lost, is cast into disuse,
 Lest it should wound its owner.

Ne'ertheless,
 There is a language that doth plainly speak
 In all the man—a misery that is
 A neighbour unto madness. You can read
 In the scorched furrows of his painful brow,
 The pale lips parted, with such woe-like cast,
 The nerveless posture of the frame and limbs,
 The steadfast strain of the wild, fiery eye ;
 That zealot frenzy, or remorse, or dread,
 Or non-communion with his fellow-man,
 Have ne'er unpoised from off its pivot fine
 The rock of balanced reason. Long hath he
 Stood rooted there upon the self-same spot.
 Night is full grown ; and now the grove is full
 Of many-varied voices. Every aisle
 Is living with a myriad flashing lights,
 And every cranny hath its lantern-worm :
 Melody contends with dissonancy :
 In brake and glade nocturnal life is up,
 And fox, and owl, and nightingale compete
 For star-clad Hecate's prize. The unloosed winds
 Softly coquette the feathery bows among ;
 And moonlight dapples with its silver sheen
 The leafy roofing and the herby floor,
 And sparkles on the polished marble fane
 With chaste and suitable resplendency.
 The lonely priest hath shaken off his trance,
 And slowly paces now the shadowy path

Towards the temple. Suddenly he stops,
 And the lax form is brusquely gathered up
 Into a rigid vigour ; fitfully,
 From the dark covert where he sheltered stands,
 His eyes with a wild changeful lustre glare,
 And his hand fumbles in his tunic's fold,
 From whence a bright blade rapidly is plucked.
 The portal of the temple is illumed
 In the full lustre of unclouded light.
 His quick eye, following his quicker ear—
 Whose acute sense has grown intensely fine
 From anxious use—upon the temple wall,
 But for an instant, has observed to flit
 A human shadow. Instantly he scents
 The holy duel. A frantic joy,
 That finally some chance has come to break
 The horror of monotony, lends him
 An aspect wild and supernatural.
 A smile ferocious sets upon his lips,
 And the deep cunning of the lunatic
 Emits from his sharp eye its subtle glow ;
 The while he dallies with his poniard's point,
 And seems to brood intently. Presently
 A change comes o'er him, and, with lowly mien
 Calm air, and tranquil pace, doth he emerge
 Into the moonlight ; shaping so his course
 Towards the temple that his shadow's length
 Lies out before him on the grassy slope.
 With feigned devotion he doth often pause,
 And act a holy and abstracted part,
 Gazing to heaven, then down to earth again,
 As the detected ambush he draws nigh ;
 Seeming in self communion deeply plunged,
 But ever scanning with a furtive eye
 The lurking-place of his expectant foe :
 He plays his lure so cunningly, his foil
 Might count assured triumph, till are brought
 The moon, himself, and foe into one line—
 The moonlight falling full upon his back.
 Now does he pause in seeming ecstasy,
 That wraps him in reflection, and subdues
 His limbs' volition, leaving him a mark
 To his screened adversary's lurking blade.
 But mark now ! From the brake (not with the bound
 Of the keen tiger or assassin lithe,
 Who, o'er the velvet sward you would expect
 Swiftly or stealthily to see approach,
 Bare-armed, bare-footed, with the flashing knife
 Grasped in his stringent clutch, dart on his prey ;
 Who, ere you wink, would be in striking reach,
 And the raised hand descend with hissing sound,
 And the next instant to behold a corse,

And one with dripping blade, contemplating
 The work of that foul moment : 'tis not so)
 With pace deliberate, and sternly calm,
 A step elastic, and straight youthful form,
 The comer traverses the interspace,
 Till their two shadows mingled are as one.
 The lonely priest a sudden wheel has made,
 Timed to the warning shadow, bringing him
 With lightning speed confronted with his foe :
 And with a ready plunge his steel is thrust
 At the intruder's bosom ; but the aim,
 Though well directed, reaches not its mark.
 So he stands, scatheless of the other's point,
 Scanning his opposite with steadfast eye
 At safely-measured distance. Silently
 Each with a varied scrutiny surveys
 His adversary with a fixed, expressive gaze,
 Gauging their forces with deliberate ken,
 Weighing the chance of the avertless strife.
 Over each visage, as they fix'd stand,
 A changed expression comes, softening the ire--
 Of one to pity, to the other shame ;
 For the two men such contrast do present
 Of age and freshness, weariness and youth,
 As doth the blasted bough that rots beside
 The freshly-bourgeond spray in vernal green.
 The sad, worn heritor of solitude
 Surveyed th' aspirant to his sombre charge
 With undisguised and wondering sympathy,
 That one, whose flower of life was yet in bloom,
 Should court the withering shade's obscurity ;
 While he, the younger, measured the shrunk form
 And haggard aspect that presented there,
 With a compassionate, regretful shame
 That his young vigour, in the coming strife,
 Should so unequally be undermatched.
 Now, in the silence of the solemn shade,
 The votary of Aricia's hollow voice
 Is heard with strange distinctness, though the tone
 Is scarcely raised above a whisper's pitch,
 And less in anger than compassionate.
 " Thou art to Dian or to Pluto sworn,
 And, self-devoted, thou art come in stealth,
 Breaking the bounding of this sacred grove ;
 Hoping to make thy daggers point the key
 That shall unlock for me the mournful gates
 Of peaceful Hades ; that thou mayst succeed
 Unto my sacred, melancholy task.
 In the glade of the slain priests of Dian,
 Where one of us the other must enearth,
 I could point out to thee five grass-grown graves,
 Whose tenants have, like thee, aspired to snatch

What I am vowed to guard ; but among them
 Not one, like thee, in the fresh grace of youth :
 Each one had from life's wasted winecup drained
 Its choicest-flavoured potion, and not recked
 That the sure rue that lurked within the lees,
 To scorch and wither, should be marked of men.
 The hill of being (whose ascending slope
 Is warm with sunshine and alluring hope,
 Spite of the gloom and shadow that doth lie
 Upon the downward pent, near to whose foot
 That silent city looms where sleep the dead)
 Is by thee yet scarcely a fourth part trod.
 All the bright aims of untried life were thine—
 In Love, Renown, Philosophy, or Arms ;
 With the rich prizes—Beauty, Wealth, and Fame—
 To conjure aspiration : yet pine you
 For isolation in this ghostly grove !
 Hast thou detected, then, the venom'd cate
 That tempts so in youth's banquet ? Hast thou seen
 The asp that lurks beneath the velvet leaf
 Of pleasure's posy ? Has fine beauty's cheek
 Suggested to thy mind the odious thought
 Of grave-worms, and corruption in the shroud ?
 Has the scent of blood assailed thy nostrils,
 As the triumphant hero's purple robe
 Shook out its folds between you and the wind ?
 Or did the crimson horsehair in his helm
 Mentally picture streams of human gore
 That he hast waded through ? Or hast thou learnt
 How devious and indirect the paths
 By which world-worshipped men have often reach'd
 The temple on Fame's summit ? Is thy soul
 Sickened to desperation with the strife,
 And jarring theories of contending schools,
 Each one proclaiming what the rest deny,
 And truth is lost in quibbling sophistries ?
 Hath woman played her part, and brought despair
 To thy existence ; with false, feigning art,
 Which thou believedst, luring thee to ope
 The casket of thy heart, and squander all
 Its diamond store with an implicit trust
 That dreamed not of betrayal or deceit ;
 But when betrayal came, and thou wert bare,
 Thou, in sad spirit destitution, then
 Wert desp'rate driven, and reckless grown of life ?"
 He ceases speech, and a short pause ensues ;
 For o'er his listener there had come a change,
 That scarcely seemed he to be now the same
 With him who recently defiant stood.
 The hale and youthful flush excitement threw
 Over his visage in the anxious past
 Has in the intervening lapse died out,

As the red glow on hills at sunset fades,
 And leaves them haggard from its absent light.
 The stamp of woe and nameless misery,
 Though not so time-stamped, is no less defined
 In him than in his elder questioner ;
 'Tis e'en more ghastly, more unnatural,
 Being out of course. Still the form of grace,
 The brown, crisp curls that crown the polished brow,
 The ingenuous spirit, which the veil of woe
 Covers, but not conceals, incongruous seems
 To the blank hopelessness his features bear.
 "Make it no question," like a troubled strain
 Of music, spoke he. "Which of life's deceits
 Hath wrought me to renounce the haunts wherein,
 As thou infer'st, the seeming only seems.
 I seek not to prescribe what others should,
 Who, having pledged assurances for Hope,
 Have found it a defaulter. Let them choose
 In scant instalments, and by drudging thrift,
 That which is lost to straitly reacquire ;
 Salving misfortune's soreness with the thought
 That others are as poor ; or if they will,
 Having been wrecked by falsehood and chicane,
 Take refuge in the arts by which they fell,
 And from their sufferings draw their skill to harm,
 Or prey upon the trustful : each must take
 From instinct or tuition his own bent,
 To master out redemption ; but to one
 Who knows how hopeless and impossible
 The height he's fallen from to re-ascend ;
 Who in the darkened gulf wherein he writhes
 Discerns no guiding ray that may illumine
 His Stygian gloom of soul ; can only wait
 Till outward dimness has familiar grown,
 Ere he can grope a passage, be there one ;
 Externally all is chaotic void,
 But from within a surging train of wild,
 Mocking remembrances, derisive flaunt
 His broken hopes, and lost illusions 'fore
 His retrospective sprite ; while solemn shades,
 Some whispering temptingly of the sure cure
 Oblivious death affords, and pointing out
 Its thousand means and manners of access,
 Insiduously charm ; while fiercely some
 Suggest with fiery eloquence the charm
 That in deep, subtle vengeance is comprised,
 And hint at hateful methods, that revolt
 The yet unsmothered virtue in his soul ;
 And a voice speaks within him, with a soft
 And soothing music, 'It is worthier
 To suffer from the venom'd shaft of wrong
 Than to contaminate with foul revenge

The cleanly spirit.' In his bosom grows
 A yearning for repose, a soft surcease
 From passion's jarring and distracting reign,
 Then, like a kind physician, mildly comes
 Saintly Devotion, with persuasive voice
 Whispering of consolation and of peace.
 Enough! For my election hath been made.
 I have pronounced the irrevocable vow,
 And dedicated stand to carry out
 The sore prescribed condition, which annuls
 Thy life and tenure, ere mine can commence.
 Yet it revolted in me valour's sense—
 Though all means are allowed—to steal or lurk,
 Till unawares thou mightst be safely slain;
 To send death, winged from some close thicket's shade,
 Or deal the coward blow that strikes behind.
 I had not the base courage: therefore,
 With no taint to my vow, I have essayed
 To equalise the chance much as I might;
 But age and feebleness, alas! still leave
 Discrepancy between us, which I grieve,
 As neither can I spare myself nor thee."
 At his regret he utters mournfully,
 He turns aside with piteous gesturing;
 But, as he does so, finds the icy steel
 Of the wan votary pierce his guardless breast:
 Reeling he turns, amazed, and gazes on
 A being wildly changed, and phrenzy wrought;
 Whose crafty eye, quickened by madness's fire,
 Marked the unguarded action, and the bound
 And blow were made as one. And now he stands
 Possessed with the malignant fever-joy
 That doth bereave him of the human mien,
 And stamp him with a fiend's. His outstretched arms
 Mill the air wildly, and his strident laugh
 Wakes through the silent grove an echo lewd,
 And the fierce taunt comes hissing through his teeth
 Jagged, and broken like the elder wolf's.
 "Ha! hunter, that doth moral with thy prey:
 That strokest the bristles of the bay'd wild boar,
 Lamenting thy sore feelings thou'rt constrained
 Next to agorge him! Wot you not, the crouch
 May but forewarn the spring, the spring the butt?
 Strength, trustful, lightly recks of shifty craft,
 But learns to rue its wreak. Thou canst not spare.
 Thou'st vowed me unto death! Thou to succeed!
 Thou pratest, 'All's allowable,' and yet
 Standest on higher creed! But know, with me
 The precept and the practice are as one.
 I know no paltering 'twixt the word and deed.
 Thou'rt sped! And, though I cannot pity thee,
 Thou hast my envy; I deserve thy thanks;

For I have cut thee off from bitterness
 Of leaden and oppressive solitude,
 That makes the sunlight cumberous by day,
 The pale stars glimmer, or the moon's full ray
 Dull, but unmitigated martyrdom :
 For in this sentient ball, which feels by turns
 A seathing furnace and a mass congealed,
 Seem piled the weight of the all-spanning sky ;
 And all the ponderous airs that do exhaust,
 And waste me with the effort to respire
 Bear penal torture on their breath to me.
 The senses, that as blessings were designed,
 It hath translated into curses dire,
 Making this grove vital with enmity ;
 Each object threat'ning, and those far the worst
 That are the stillest fixed : a death-like threat,
 Which makes my rebel heart with duller drum
 To register the pace of slothful Time ;
 That Time who is my most relentless foe,
 With whom I struggle in the hopeless strife,
 But who tenaciously denies to bait
 One beat of his drear torment : for of late
 He hath beguiled from me capricious sleep
 Who was ere while my friend, and sent him forth
 To drone his drowsy lullaby to slaves,
 And labour lethargied mortalities :
 Therefore, each breath is an unuttered curse
 On the oppression insupportable
 I vainly strive to cast, but which my vow,
 Like an inflexible and stringent bond,
 Doth slowly sink me under.

To the last
 Shall be fulfilled the inexorable law
 To which I am self-condemned—to guard and cling
 To the great curse of loneliness, which thou
 Escapest by thy death.

Lo ! down thy side
 The trickling stain through all thy tunic's plies
 Gives sign how life is surely ebbing out :
 From thy relaxing fingers glides the hilt
 Of thy unblooded poniard ; and the hue
 Of ashen death steals, like the gloom of eve,
 O'er the warm sunlight of thy youthful brow ;
 While thy contracting eyeballs' lights dim out,
 Leaving thee blank and ghastly, who but now
 Rivalled Adonis' bloom : thy polished brow
 Grows solemn, as the shades of dusky Hades
 Open, and darkly compass thee about
 With their oblivious and abhorrent folds,
 Far more repugnant than the suffering
 Of pain-drawn being here.

Ah ! feign to smile

In scornful pity, and to lie with looks
 That would convey contempt of life like mine,
 And welcome the exterminating Death !
 I know the trick by which despair puts on
 The mask of courage, and with false grimace,
 (As a vain actor struts from off the scene
 But by himself admired, to all beside
 An artless and ridiculous pretence,
 Wrapped in his own delusion) would assume
 Weakly to ape indifference.

Speak at least !

If that impatient Mercury hath left
 Thine unbenumbed tongue the power to wag
 And utter its last lie.

Be it one word.

Pity, or Envy, that I thee survive—
 Brief as, alas ! that remnant span may be—
 Speak it ! and render me still more accursed,
 Or mitigate the weight of present woe.
 Life here in restless dread ! There the unknown !
 The silent, echoless, mysterious blank
 Of unimaginable, awful Death !
 Art thou a stranger in unfeigning sooth,
 To that cold qualm, and sinking of the soul,
 I quail with, when involuntarily
 My fancy wanders to that shadowy realm,
 Where awful Pluto reigns in rayless gloom,
 Sternly supreme, unutterably dread ?
 Appalling but inevitable state !
 Thronged with sad legions of lapsed woeful sprites,
 In dimness jostling through the caves of Death ;
 Wandering perpetually, but purposeless,
 The cheerless labyrinths of fineless blank,
 Which mocks the longing (that perforce must grow
 Out of such endless nothingness) to be
 Freed by annihilation from the dull
 And chilly vagueness that doth dominate.
 And from this doom none who have lived escape !
 Of Life's medallion 'tis the sad reverse !
 Life is the seed—Death the eternal Tree !
 We people Earth, that Hades' depths may swarm !
 And for this dower of being, and of death,
 Thrust on us by our parents, spite of us,
 We pay them love and filial reverence !
 Love we the pestilence that spots us o'er
 With flaming garboils and unseemly blight ?
 And yet *its* curse (less than the gift of theirs)
 Hath limit here : theirs stretches 'yond the grave.
 Life clad in joy, or turmoil, ponders not
 The dread enigma whose mysterious word
 Death alone can resolve. But solitude
 Hath thrust on me the e'er recurring theme ;

And I have laboured the ghaſt riddle o'er
 In ſpeculations, numberleſs as vain ;
 Till each imagining has fixed itſelf
 In ever-preſent and abhorrent ſhow
 To my reluctant viſion, that would fain
 Shut the repugnant and grim pageant out.
 To life, with its inevitable woe,
 As known, and muſt be known by me, I cling ,
 Since every poſſibility of death
 Hath an aſpect more terrible for me
 Than can exiſtence' worſt conditions ſhow.
 The robe of being ſcorches as it clings ;
 But to caſt that, and don the frozen garb
 Of icy Hades, more appals by far.
 I curſe the contemplations which obtrude
 Of that ſole ſubject of my brooding thoughts,
 Which makes my brain a charnel-haunted cell,
 Where neighbouring madneſs lurks to ſieze her prey.
 I curſe the involuntary quivering
 That chills my members and benumbs my heart,
 When, like a driving cloud, the obtruding thought
 Envelopes me with its cold, ſwaithing fear.
 I curſe the weakneſs, native or acquired,
 So impotent to battle with the fate—
 Th' inevitable fate—that mortals bear
 As fee to their condition in the leaſe,
 The tyrant-bond of life which Nature drew,
 And will, I know, exact.

Not long the term
 Too well, alas ! I know : but Nature was
 My doomſter, and its bond ſhall be my law :
 No human agent ſhall interpret it,
 Nor mitigate its ſpan. My vaſſal life
 Hath but one Lord, whoſe bailiff is grim Death—
 Cunning and greedy, with bye-ſleights and force,
 To break the covenant his maſter made ;
 He hath his inſtruments ſuborned to work
 By divers dark devices, violences,
 Frauds on the charter Nature granted me :
 I will diſpute the exaction to the verge
 Of my juſt mortal limit ; then this dole
 Of fleſh, and bone, and ſinew, he doth yearn
 To batten on, falls as his legal prey.
 But I will baulk his banquet while I may,
 Or ſtay his hungry maw with hoſtile blood.
 His leagues ſhall be my proxies at his feaſt
 Of common offal. I bequeath thee his !
 I will encompass thee with cruſt of earth,
 And garniſh thee with green and ſavoury herbs,
 And trencher thee with appetiſing care ;
 That the great glutton's bony jaws ſhall ooze
 With greedy longing of the dainty fare.

Ah ! do thy heavy eyelids fall, and veil
 The feeble glimmer of this pallid light,
 As too oppressive to thy dimming orbs ?
 Do thy relaxing sinews let thee down,
 As the o'er-weary infant after sport
 Droops, and subsides to slumber's leaden thrall
 Needing no lullaby, nor uttering
 A valediction to its chamberlain ?
 Nay, pass not so ! with that calm, blissful smile
 Such as doth grace the happy bridegroom's lip
 Who pauses at the bridal chamber-port,
 To calm the tumult of expectant love
 Ere he adventures to make love his own.
 Death is no triumph ! Yet thou seem'st to wear
 A festal aspect : and the shadowing
 That Death's dull cypress throws, is countervailed
 As with the flowery garland of delight,
 Of some assured, untried felicity,
 Crowning thy trustful hope, illumining
 The doubtful mystery of after-state
 With an entrancing promise.

Now thine eyes
 Unveil again, but not to dart the glance
 Which only hate in death is gifted with ;
 The look that spells, and lives in memory ;
 But not as thy forgiving glance will live.
 I might exult at the unspoken curse
 Lips formed themselves to speak, but lacked the breath ;
 But soft commiseration wreathes around
 Thy mouth, as lilies round a temple porch
 Emblem the holiness they're reared to guard.
 Pity and pardon—as the ebbing tide
 Of life flows forth—mantle thy marble face
 With the fixed aspect of a statued form
 That effigies benignity divine.
 How thou hast lived I may not hope to know ;
 But thy death's silent lesson teaches more
 Than lengthened details of recital could.
 Thy bosom's garden hath been cleanly kept,
 And the great citadel the nameless part
 Of man abides in hath been nobly held ;
 Provisioned with just thoughts, and guarded close
 From the approaches of those lurking ills
 Of appetite and passion, ceaselessly
 Threatening, or luring, with arrayed assault
 Or flattering safety. Ne'ertheless, perhaps,
 Under some guise the ill has pierced the guard.
 Is man so vulnerable, then, at best
 That, where the outward evil fails in dint,
 The inward good may wreck him ?

Must he guard
 His virtue as a vice, and doubt the friend,

If trusted over-far, becomes his foe?
 Is he his own friend—will he trust himself?
 Or trusted, will he not be self-deceived?
 Knows he himself, in all the subtle coil,
 Of Nature's windings, or unravelling time,
 Or circumstance unreckoned in his count?
 For, could man reckon all, he would transcend
 The human, and in vanity affront
 Olymp'an Jove with mortal's direst fault.
 No, he must brook and discipline his host
 Of jarring elements, indigenous
 To the rebellious continent of flesh
 He holdeth empire in, with potent heed;
 And as within him legislative strength,
 Or feebleness, is native, so shall reign
 Discord or harmony, distress or weal,
 And all the radiant promise of success
 That ushered in his being, close in gloom
 Or fatal anarchy. Fallacious state!
 Where the poor puppet who believes him lord
 Is subject to the subject, and cajoled
 Into belief, where he is ruled, he rules.
 The poison-weed concentrates death, unseen,
 Beneath the shelter of the wholesome tree;
 So what is worst within us lurks behind
 Our better compositions, but no less
 They both are of us, as the fruit and bane
 Are of the earth.

Oh mystic mother Earth!
 Dost thou then teem with wretchedness far more
 Than thou dost bring forth joy? Or hast thou placed
 That prize of life, obscurely sheltered in
 The humble covert, where the upward gaze
 Of eager emulation doth not bend;
 Allured by tempting clusters that provoke
 The upward grasp, which, being plucked, are dust,
 Or after bitterness that taunts and palls?
 I sicken with the vain, dry crudity!
 I envy that calm rest he seems to sleep
 Who lieth there: for life hath faded out
 As gradually as the day descends
 Into the calm of night; and that close dread,
 That haunted me erewhile, of the unknown,
 Yields to new-born desire to be, like him,
 Participator of tranquillity,
 Or something new to my uncertainty.
 Foul, dripping blade! repugnant art thou grown;
 No more my hand shall thy assistance claim:
 In the dark brake the damps of earth shall rust
 The bloody evidence of thy employ,
 And I will welcome—"

His last utterance

Was made, for, as the steel flew from his hand,
 A feathered shaft was buried in his heart,
 And his successor reigned in solitude ;
 His sad inaugural duty to inhume
 The victims, and abide his time of doom.

PERTURBATION.

KNOW Croydon? Have I e'er been there ?

It seemed a very simple question :
 And yet it summoned from its lair
 The grim and spectral suggestion,
 Of a past, fearful, long-drawn night,
 Crowded with horror and dismay ;
 With elfic terrors thickly dight,
 " As e'er with stars the milky way :"
 A boundless wilderness of dread,
 An infinite of perturbation,
 An ocean-waste, by fury spread,
 And shored by grinning desolation :
 A seeming endless martyrdom,
 Where anguish in a circle spun,
 And, whirling madly in the gloom,
 Returned to where it first begun.

It was my time of holiday,
 The Sabbath of my year, my feast of rest,
 The oasis, with shadows grey,
 In labour's desert, beautiful and bless'd ;
 I with a friend did covenant
 For a week's ramble o'er the Surrey hills,
 To feed the hungry spirits want,
 'Mid the sweet concert of their groves and rills.
 Our first day's tramp had reached its close,
 And it so fell that Croydon was to be
 Our destined station of well-earned repose,
 The first stage in our " travel's history :"
 We housed hard by the College pile,
 Whose hoarse-voiced clock drones out the rusty hour,
 With gustful zest we did beguile
 Our appetites with forty-pauper power :
 The night sped on with quaffs and smokes ;
 We talked the news with the assembled guests ;
 We told, and laughed at, novel jokes,
 And feigned to laugh, as new, at ancient jests.

"Early and orderly retire to bed,"
 However, seemed the local motto given,
 For every guest had vanish'd,
 Before the college clock had struck eleven ;
 My usual day had scarce sippers ;
 We sat the two remaining sippers ;
 The chambermaid (an ugly one)
 Appeared with candles and with slippers.
 So, with resigned and patient air,
 But with an inwardly foreboding gloom,
 I followed up the creaking stair,
 And entered with regret my curtained room.

Hark ! 'tis the chime ! The warning given ;
 The pulse of Chronos beats again :
 Four notice-spasms, then eleven,
 Dull, husky, batters, *à l'airain*.
 Clank goes the chain, clatter the bar,
 Shot was the bolt, the portal's jar ;
 The host's and help's retreating tread,
 Each timely stealing off to bed,
 Anon the dull vibration comes
 Of muffled treads in distant rooms,
 And soon the peaceful mystery
 Of sleep begins for all but me.

Wakeful, but weary, listless, full
 Of fancies, crowding, and importunate,
 Vainly I court a mental lull,
 My wooing's vain, and I unfortunate ;
 For cohort memories surge about,
 Abiding not, but fleeting thin ;
 And, as I drive one legion out,
 Other obtruding hosts come trooping in ;
 And now my light is out, and I,
 Supine in down, repeated efforts strain,
 In darkness closing up my eye,
 To quench the restless wild-fire of the brain :
 But no, their antics wilder grow.
 Freed from the rivalry of actual thing,
 I seemed sole witness of a show
 Before whom mental mimes their pageants bring.

At first the action seemed to cast
 A repetition of my life, played back
 From present to the misty past,
 With strange perversions and with license slack :
 And he that played my other self
 Excited oft my thorough discontent—
 So loose and inexpert the elf
 Appeared to no fixed purpose to be bent ;
 What chafing, keen regret I knew,
 As self-deluded, or by other cheats

Bandied, I passed each folly through,
 Involved in sad, ridiculous defeats ;
 What rueful bitterness arose
 At disillusionments that came crowding thick,
 Imagined friends revealed as foes,
 And specious service seen as cunning trick ;
 Dilemmas from false judgment sprung,
 The ill result born of some trivial lapse ;
 The hair on which momentous hung
 Results of fortune's smiles, or its mishaps.
 These grew, and ever uglier grew ;
 The pigmy actors swelled to giants dire,
 And I the intensest longing knew
 To shut the vision out as it drew nigher ;
 For every lineament and limb—
 Enlarging on my scared and shrinking sight—
 Became so unfamiliar, grim,
 That discontent grew tremor, then affright ;
 And wildly I thrust forth my arms,
 To stay the onward-moving, hideous throng ;
 And all the fell obtruding swarms
 Vanished, as bang, bang, chimed the clock's ding, dong.

'Twelve ! why to me that sound appears
 To mark the flight of countless years !
 And life appears begun and ended,
 With all its crude discomforts blended.

My sight had mediumed my first fears ;
 'Twas now the turn to cheat my ears :
 As every stroke lugubrious fell
 Upon the dull and rauquey bell,
 Seemed mingled in imagination,
 A faint, infernal cachination,
 Distinct, yet seemingly combined,
 Bursting and melting on the wind ;
 And, echoed by a thousand elves,
 Twelve sounded like a thousand twelves !

The silence seemed to infant sounds,
 Whose strange variety confounds
 The memory to assimilate
 To spiritual or earthly state :
 Strange whisperings, breathings, sighs, and moans,
 Faint throbings, clickings, purrings, drones,
 So marvellously fine to blend,
 Unknown where perfect silence' end :
 And every voice, and note, and tone,
 Endowed with converse of its own ;
 That, meteor-like, shoot through the mind,
 For each that answering voices find ;
 Agreeing not, reproving them
 With subtle, analytic ken.

At first these sounds came one by one,
 At intervals ; then crowding on,
 In such impatient hurry tossed,
 Order and harmony were lost.
 And as the jarring sounds increased,
 The tumult louder, longer pressed ;
 Till deaf'ning, dinning discords tear
 The assail'd and confus'd ear ;
 And then a ponderous, bursting roar,
 And all was silent as before.
 A silence dead, and heavy, and dull,
 That had no relief in it, though 'twas a lull ;
 For I felt my heart, like a cag'd bird,
 Flutter and leap, by terror stirred ;
 Yet I heard not the sound of its heavy thud, thud,
 Though 'twas beating as fast and as hard as it could :
 And very distinctly and vividly I
 Can remember a fancy suggested thereby
 Of its action and function, so regular, fine,
 Ceaselessly pumping its vital red wine ;
 And I longed for the power, could it possibly be,
 To be *in it*, instead of its being *in me* ;
 To watch and to seek for the secret spring,
 Whose action or pause was the life of the thing ;
 And my longing seemed crowned, and I fancied I stood
 In its cavities vast, by its torrents of blood :
 Its deep-vaulted chamber-walls, flexile and warm,
 Contract and expand with a regular charm,
 Till some sudden emotion produces a thrill,
 And the currents turn back, or stand suddenly still ;
 Then rush on again with a violent roar
 More impetuous and wild than they flooded before :
 Some streams appear ending where others begin,
 There are some rushing out, there are some rushing in ;
 Upward, downward, in every conceivable way,
 These fountains of life still continue to play ;
 Yet all seems so fragile and delicate there,
 'Tis hard to review without feeling a fear ;
 And the wish to be thence is the breach of the spell ;
 And I—hark ! what is that ? Oh, that horrible bell !

Horrible ? No ! Why call it so ?

Let it be loud, or let it be low,

It was the work of man, I trow,

Who—haunted by grim, spectral fears,

Far back, in dim, mysterious years,

Where fact more faint than fancy peers—

Hung it up in the turret high,

To scare the evil things that fly

In dark, nocturnal demonry.

So I have heard ; and, if it be,

Come—oh ! come—to the help of me ;

From ghostly fancy set me free.

No, no ; it will not, will not, sound
Until its hourly set comes round.

Another long-drawn space,
With some new train of notions grim—
To bridge the weary interim—
In heterogeneous chase.

Sixty times sixty impish things,
Each separate sixty formed in rings,
Dimly begin to prance ;

With regular and rapid bound,
Whirl round and round and round and round,
In mad, but measured, dance ;

And sixty more, at slower rate,
And yet not slowly, circulate
In steady, following run.

The former sixty circles make
In the same time the latter take
T' accomplish only one.

And, as I gaze, the circles grow,
Each coming one more vast and slow ;
And all begin to blend

Into one steady, measured beat,
To clap of hands, and tramp of feet,
In vistas without end.

The nearer spin with dizzying whirl,
Receding, largely seem t' unfurl,
And slower still revolve ;

Upwards, like worlds, they dimly grew,
And, melting from the aching view,
In distant space dissolve ;

Downwards, minutely dwindling out
Of vision's scope, and leaving doubt
Where sense of them began ;

And still, as they attenuate,
At whirling, and more rapid rate,
The tapering circles span ;

And I, confounded, seemed between
The wheelage of some vast machine,
Unlimited in space,

Where Time's gradations dreadful grew,
Distending and contracting, too
Minute and vast to trace ;

While near, remote, a monotone
Of deafning strokes and distant drone—
Appalling, but sublime—

The universe seemed to pervade,
With never-ending serenade,
Of time, time, time, time, time !

And in the dying concert—well,
 I could distinguish that dull bell
 That I had heard before :
 Of every beat I felt the shock
 Of that abhorred, contiguous clock,
 Right opposite the door.

Oh ! clock of Croydon College ! I
 Shall ne'er forget the knowledge I
 Acquired of your chronology
 Each weary hour by hour ;
 Oh ! the subdivided anguish
 Through which I had to languish !
 One could scarce an added pang wish,
 As his mortal foeman's dower.
 Oh ! the misery protracted,
 Which my mental sight refracted,
 And the sounds that sense distracted ;
 And the many-featured dread,
 Which my fancy-fed illusions,
 In their clearness and confusions,
 Wrought in terrible collusions,
 And to nameless sufferings led !
 The cruel intuition
 Of the Spanish Inquisition
 (If no injustice has been done)
 Was impotent, resourceless,
 To the images remorseless
 I'd to think and gaze upon.
 My chamber was a torture room,
 Worse than the Pit of Pendulum.*
 By every object there comprised
 I was in some way agonised :
 'Try to escape from 't as I might,
 By thought of beauty or delight,
 Some horrid metamorphose grew,
 And faded, like dissolving view,
 In grimace and distortion.
 And, when at last came morning light,
 'Twas with suspicion and affright,
 And mixture of aversion.
 I saw it as the first false phase
 Of some new mockery's treacherous haze
 To my address directed ;
 And if it be within belief,
 In place of feeling of relief,
 I felt myself neglected.

* Edgar Poe's story.

A GAME OF CHESS.

MOHAMMED, of the soul infernal,
 Of heart unfilial, unfraternal,
 Who, by unnatured plots and war,
 To win the throne of Granada,
 With factions and discordant pain,
 Had vexed his father's sober reign ;
 And on his death, with guilty might,
 Had seized his elder brother's right ;
 And for eleven years his thrall
 In Solobrena's prison wall
 That brother bore a captive's lot—
 For freedom sighed, but found it not.
 Yet were his captive-sorrows soothed ;
 Restrictions, that his spirit loathed,
 Were lightened by the ruthless soul,
 Doomed as his ward and strict control.

The Alcade owned a spirit kind—
 Jailer in function, not in mind :
 He oft would seek the captive's tower,
 And lighten the else leaden hour
 By such assuaging courtesies
 As gentle natures best devise ;
 With studied tact each mood he knew,
 And each desire conformed unto,
 Consistent with his duty's claim,
 With an unvaried, kindly aim ;
 Would listen or dilate at measure,
 To suit the Prince's mood and pleasure,
 And ever with that tender sense,
 Of mindful, manly difference,
 That strength and suavity combined,
 That can be firm, but must be kind.

Oft in the princely Jusef's eyes
 The tears of gratitude would rise ;
 Then, with averted face, he'd seek
 To hide a sign as warm as weak ;
 The man and monarch inly strove ;
 But pride was quenched in human love.
 And daily thus, by liens new,
 These kindly natures closer drew,
 And half a prison's terrors fled
 Before the light that friendship shed.

But now King Death, with cycles crowned,
 Is drawing close his cordons round
 The tyrant's citadel of life,
 Where surge contention, fear, and strife ;

The poisoned cup but holds the lees
 Of fire, to quench death's agonies ;
 Its scent of blood is mockery,
 And in its depth perditions lie ;
 There lurk a nation's hate and scorn,
 Blasted ambition, hopes forlorn,
 The rusts of wrong, the sediment
 Of a false life, with crime bespent.
 Upon his dark and clammy brow
 The storm of thought is settled now,
 As round some mountain summit dire
 The tempests mass their force and fire.
 From out his vision's sunken cells
 Emerge, as if from dual hells,
 Intense but sickly gleams of flame ;
 And on his sallow lips one name—
 Bitterly breathed, in whisper dread,
 Denotes from whence the flames are fed.
 "Jusef"—and then a shudder ran
 O'er all his frame and features wan ;
 His teeth are clenched, his brows are knit,
 Resolve portentously doth sit
 Upon his brows o'erhanging pent,
 Foreshadowing some fell intent.
 He rises, grasps the tasselled thong,
 And strikes upon the silver gong.
 Swart Ahmed at the portal stands,
 And, bending, waits his high commands.
 "Bring that which is required to write ;
 Kneel down, and trace what I indite."
 He hurries out ; he hastens back ;
 He kneels beside the rich yatak.*
 The kalem† trembles as it marks
 Words damned as Jehannum‡ sparks.
 The mandate ended, from the dye
 He dips a new and black supply :
 The tyrant's grasp, with eager greed,
 Receives the inky-pointed reed,
 And tremblingly subscribes the name
 Whose sight is doom, whose letters shame.
 Wretch ! with that mandate, let me tell,
 Thou lightst thy penal fire in hell ;
 With that last, damning drop of ink
 Thou dampst the flame of pardon's link ;
 And in thy name that ciphered O
 Symbols eternity of woe.
 The pen falls from his yielding hold ;
 With steel-like glance, as bright as cold,
 He pierces breathless Ahmed through,
 Who feels a dread he dare not show.

* Bed.

† Pen.

‡ Hell.

' Ahmed ! thou readst my fixed intent
 In this dark-written testament.
 Though oft deferred the purpose past,
 My old designs are act at last.
 Shall I succumb, and he survive ?
 No ! after me he shall not live.
 Speed, Ahmed, speed, and no delay,
 To Solobrena take thy way ;
 Thou bearest the scroll of destiny
 To mine—or him that there doth lie.
 Tremble at sloth, rejoice at speed ;
 Spare not thyself, spare not thy steed ;
 Be there before the stars of night,
 And here again ere morning's light ;
 You ride to win your life and breath,
 For life to him, to you is death.
 My rule and life have reached their span,
 Though after his that life began ;
 And of death's pangs the sharpest pain
 Is, that he—not my son—should reign.
 I yield to him the elder right
 To enter first the gates of light,
 So to my son I may secure
 Precedence here that will endure.
 Man's paradise is here below ;
 I know none other, none would know ;
 Nor would I near him, even there,
 Partake of bliss that he might share ;
 The gulf of hate between us lies
 Too broad for bridge of paradise ;
 Participation cannot be
 On earth, in heaven, for him and me."
 He ceases speech, waves Ahmed hence ;
 He's left to silence and suspense ;
 While Ahmed, pricked by selfish fear,
 Towards Solobrena doth career.

Within the zindan-oda* now
 The deepening sapphire after-glow
 Doth lend its greeny-purple hue,
 The moresque lattice streaming through ;
 While, 'tween the rusty grating's space,
 The evening moths and midges chase,
 And buzz their faint and dreamy dun
 As valediction to the sun.
 In that dim light two forms are bent—
 Two faces, thoughtful and intent,
 Over a chessboard's chequered plain,
 Anxious as for a battle's gain.
 Intense and settled scrutiny
 Is fixed in either player's eye ;

* Prison chamber.

And by their aspect you may learn
 The strife has reached a doubtful turn ;
 The pause is long, the light grows scant,
 All turns to shadow plain and gaunt ;
 Yet they so still and mute, you'd say,
 Two statues sit in sculptured play.
 Hark ! footsteps in the corridor
 Beat on the tessalated floor ;
 And then a summons, sharp and short,
 Struck on the zindan-oda port.
 They who, so seemingly inert,
 Now suddenly are all alert ;
 Their glances on the portal bent,
 As though inquiring what was meant,
 By call so strange and so abrupt,
 Their privacy to interrupt.
 The Alcade from his kushak* brings
 His keys, unlocks in haste, and flings
 Open the door with hurried air,
 And stands within the lurid glare
 Of lamps and torches gleaming bright
 Upon his almost dazzled sight.
 Foremost within the torches' sheen
 Mulazim, his lieutenant's seen.
 And, standing close within his rear,
 Dark Ahmed grimly doth appear ;
 While guards and jailers, close behind,
 A picture ominous combined.
 Some time the chief in wonder stands ;
 And then, with question brief, demands :
 " What is't, Mulazim, thou dost bring ?"
 " Zabet,† a rider from the King."
 He steps aside, and, by a glance,
 Gives sign for Ahmed to advance.
 Portentous marks his visage bear,
 That conjure and confirm dark fear,
 As bending slowly he presents
 The scroll that bears such dire contents.
 But note the Alcade's troubled mien,
 Which in his quivering lip is seen ;
 His brow with sudden dew's bewet,
 His glance of horror, fixed and set,
 His hand with nervous tremor shook,
 The desolation in his look,
 The angry flush on cheek and brow,
 Like hills suffused in sunset's glow,
 Which, fading, leaves the bloodless hue
 Of Lazar-lividness to view.
 His haggard, pitiable stare
 Denotes the inward tumult there,

 * Sash.

† Magistrate.

As though the sentence he had read
 Was destined for his proper head :
 He gasps as though he longs to speak,
 But finds no voice his woes to wreak ;
 Volition pauses in suspense,
 But suffering is not less intense,
 To bear the burden onerous,
 That cruel fate imposes thus.
 But briefly has his captive's mind
 The sudden circumstance divined,
 And realised the bitter truth
 That shakes his friend with wrath and ruth.
 " My generous friend, calm thy distress ;
 You fear to utter what I guess.
 There's not a word of death or dread,
 In that dark scroll, may not be read
 As tranquilly by you as I
 Can listen to its infamy.
 I've been so long prepared and calmed,
 That death of terror is disarmed :
 My eyes will spare your tongue to tell
 The purport of this mission fell,
 Although I have already guessed
 The nature of the foul behest."
 He calmly reads the mandate through,
 As though its contents he foreknew ;
 But pauses at his brother's name,
 Subscribed upon that act of shame,
 And sighs : " Oh ! brother, brother, how
 Canst thou e'er hope for pardon now,
 With signature so cursed as this,
 To bar thy soul from heavenly bliss ?
 Can kindred hatred find a match ?
 To-night ! Oh ! eager-eyed despatch !
 Take back thy warrant, gentle friend,
 All things in life must have an end ;
 And banish from thy painful brow
 The grief that doth oppress it now ;
 Call back thy glances so serene,
 Thy calm and mild accustomed mien.
 It is no heavy penalty
 To see a brave man freely die ;
 But 'tis a claim, from favours past,
 To tend and cheer him to the last.
 I may not know the longed-for grace,
 Once more to view my Zilda's face ;
 I may not know the heavenly bliss
 That lingers in a parting kiss ;
 Nor to this fond and yearning breast
 My youthful daughter may be pressed.
 But there is comfort to my lot
 In knowing that they know it not,

And for my brief remaining span
 I will forget it, if I can ;
 And you must your assistance lend,
 The last sad office of a friend.
 Of vain desires and vain regrets
 Man only added pain begets ;
 And, through existence' darkest gloom,
 The balm is, that the end will come :
 So 'tis with all things here—unless
 It be our broken game of chess.”
 His eye has fallen on the stand,
 With nice strategic cunning planned,
 Where undecided honours wait,
 Whose skill they yet must celebrate ;
 As a benighted strife must stay
 In battle trim till dawn of day,
 Each holding that they held when night
 Closed on the undecided fight.
 He scans the board with fixed regret,
 As if he mentally were playing yet
 The game whose spells obliterate
 The sense of his impending fate.
 “ My friend, my more than friend,” he cried,
 “ I long that struggle to decide.
 How shall I own what interest gave
 To me that mimic contest gave ?
 It holds my mind, absorbs my thought,
 And makes all other things as nought ;
 E'en, in my present mortal strait,
 Desire of life is not so great ;
 And, if thy warrant gave thee will
 Of boon, or favour, to me still,
 I'd crave no other lenity
 Than to conclude it ere I die.”
 The Alcade scanned the writ anew ;
 Hopeless he read its import through.
 It gave no tittle of discretion,
 No vague excuses for concession ;
 And well he knew the stern reflect,
 And consequence of his neglect,
 If he should fail, or make a flaw,
 To act the despot's written law ;
 And yet the cruel task assigned
 Had greater horror to his mind
 Than all the threat'ning penalties
 The tyrant's vengeance could devise.
 More than the victim feels he now
 The sentence is a curse of woe ;
 That lighter 'twere to endure the fate
 Than 'tis that deed to perpetrate ;
 And more he dreads, who death must give,
 Than he who must that death receive ;

Regarding every respite shown
 Unto his captive as his own ;
 Regard of self no task to quell,
 But Pity's o'ercharged fountains well
 Their sympathising, limpid brine,
 Of his strong heart the feeble sign ;
 For in the same surcharged source
 Centred his frailty and his force ;
 And from the unchoked spring at length,
 His weakness but precedes his strength.
 He suddenly becomes as calm
 And firm as influenced by a charm ;
 And in his clear, commanding eye
 Beamed conscious, mild authority.
 He speaks, with deep, sonorous tone :
 " Prince, thy last wishes shall be done."

Grim Ahmed darts with sudden bound ;
 His gleaming eyeballs circle round ;
 And, with a quick, impatient stride,
 Draws the Alcade close aside.
 " Alcade ! well consider, pray,
 The rueful sequence of delay.
 To dally with that warrant stern
 May deadly wrath and vengeance earn.
 Each mile of intervening space,
 Between Granada and this place,
 Is spanned and measured out to time,
 With streams to ford, and hills to climb ;
 And even now one foundered steed
 Has lost me time, with slackened speed ;
 I little reck the wrath to bide,
 Nor risk the death that may betide ;
 Ne'er yet I knew him to revoke
 The doom of death his tongue hath spoke ;
 And never yet, compunction-bit,
 Cancel the fiat he had writ ;
 And if through thee his sentence halt,
 'Tis thou must answer the default."

The Alcade heard him patiently,
 And then as calmly made reply :
 " Thou shalt be quit of the offence,
 And from my hand shalt carry hence
 My written free acknowledgment
 To bear the weight of the event ;
 On me whatever falls shall fall,
 And thou be scatheless held in all :
 Be thou content, I ne'er will shirk
 The onus of my proper work."
 A tremor runs through Ahmed's frame ;
 His eyes emit a ghastly flame ;
 His dark tint turns to sickly hue ;

His parted lips expose to view
 Two gleaming rows of pearly teeth—
 Chattering as though an ague breath
 Had blown upon him where he stood,
 And changed to ice his vital blood:
 “You deem my life I lightly hold,
 Or that I’m fool, as vain as bold,
 To brave his presence and his power
 In wrath and disappointment’s hour ;
 No message bear I, save the one,
 May tell his bidding has been done.
 If thou this purpose hold unto,
 Be thou the herald, brook the woe ;
 To thee I leave the doubtless scath,
 Break the behest, and hide the wrath.
 I’m powerless here, and can but make
 My protest ’gainst the course you take,
 And claim of thee thou wilt avow,
 Not I the traitor here, but thou.”
 Unmoved by ire, by doubt unswayed,
 “Mistrust me not,” the Alcade said ;
 “Let thy own safety be thy thought ;
 My deed, however danger-fraught,
 Is mine ; and no one else beside
 Its pains or honours shall divide.”
 Even on Ahmed’s murky soul
 Rev’rence and pity had control.
 His glance from Prince to jailer flies,
 And inward secret senses rise ;
 The working of some ruthless power,
 A stranger to his breast before.
 His iron felt the loadstone’s will ;
 His clay made soft at pity’s rill :
 To feel and rev’rence something new
 Dawning upon his moral view ;
 The burden—guilt—which, while he bore,
 He felt not—now he bears no more ;
 He knows the sense of its relief—
 A sense of pleasure wrapt in grief.
 A sudden ray of light has come,
 Flashing upon his spirit-gloom,
 Where good and evil’s different mien
 In novel guise are newly seen,
 Infecting all his faculties
 With sweet, contagious sympathies :
 His barren soul, an arid plain,
 Is moistened with compassion’s rain ;
 And the dry, hardened germ of good
 Quickens in the reviving flood.
 He feels from love a homage here,
 But hitherto bestowed from fear,
 Of his fierce lord, who ever hath

Held life a hostage unto faith.
 Some rapid glints of memory show
 Obedience, (ar) 'ray'd as crime and woe :
 The phantoms of the past arise
 Grimly before his unfilmed eyes,
 And his soul yearns to purge at last
 The conscience of its records past.
 But more than aught the sway that bends,
 And every other power transcends,
 Is a deep, wondering, loving awe ;
 Past thoughts with present feelings war,
 And admiration of devotion
 Wrap him in new but sweet emotion ;
 The birth of love, the death of hate,
 Each impulse seems regenerate.
 New wishes, feelings, objects surge,
 And to one common centre verge ;
 An envy—if that e'er might be—
 For good's sake, to be good as he ;
 Or, vain the hope to reach that height,
 Why, then, as near it as he might.
 He sighs, and slowly gains the door,
 To brood on thoughts ne'er felt before,
 And stands from all the rest apart,
 Deeply communing with his heart.

The abandoned game has been renewed,
 A slow, decisive, tacit feud,
 Where all the Monarch's guard and thought
 With concentrated force are brought.
 But more momentous claims distract
 The care the Alcade's points exact,
 And lose him, from pre-occupation,
 Some pieces of his combination.
 The Monarch's thought divines the cause,
 And his voice breaks the silent pause :
 " My much-distracted friend, take heed
 Lest I too easily succeed!
 Remember that 'twere scarce a boon
 To grant the mastery too soon ;
 When vaunting victory's trumpet-breath,
 Signals the sullen bell of death ;
 To vanquish small the victor's pride,
 With all the fighting on his side ;
 Rather stern battle in retreat,
 In ill-won fight's worse than defeat."
 Recalled to caution and address,
 He wakes his tact and ableness ;
 And the well-balanced contest pends,
 Doubtful where fortune's issue tends.

But rife that long-drawn game, in sooth,
 In fate and fortune is to both ;

For in the lapse Mohammed's sprite
 Hath taken its eternal flight.
 The tongue that doomed is silent now ;
 The eye that awed has lost its glow ;
 The hand that grasped, through crime and blood
 Sceptre, and throne, and masterhood,
 Lies stiff, and impotent, and cold,
 His length of infamy unrolled ;
 And its red scroll's ensanguined page,
 Left to the shuddering after-age.
 As some night beacon's cressets die,
 Signalling through the darkened sky,
 To leaguering bands, the time fore'greed,
 To dare some bold and desperate deed ;
 Granada watches, lingers on,
 Until Mohammed's course is run ;
 Then, like a wildfire's eager rush,
 The tidings flash, the explosions crush ;
 One simultaneous upheave
 The burdened masses soon relieve.
 The tyrant's son, in wild surprise,
 Unkinged, repudiated, flies,
 Leaving his yet unheard sire
 To rebels' ruth, or rebels' ire,
 To give him earth, or vengeance wreak,
 Yield him to hound or eagle's beak.

Scarce had the dusky light of morn
 The earth from night's deep darkness drawn,
 When, through the gauzy mists of grey,
 A cavalcade makes rapid way ;
 Clanging in unchecked, headlong course,
 Impelled by zealous, eager force ;
 With jubilant, exultant mien,
 Along the route that lies between
 The enfranchised town and dungeon tower,
 Over those pile death shadows lower.
 At first one lonely warder stays
 His march, and, peering through the haze,
 Uncertain if some changing rack
 Assumes, upon the russet track,
 The vague and misty forms that surge
 Upon his vision's bounded verge.
 Assured by closer scrutiny,
 From ward to ward the warnings fly ;
 The dreamy fortress is elate—
 The walls are manned, the tower, the gate :
 All, all, is wonder and surmise
 To what may tend the strange surprise.
 The foaming coursers near the wall,
 Rein up, the riders radiant all,
 With simultaneous voice declare

The purport of their advent there.
 A nation speaks in those few tongues,
 Proclaims the crisis of its wrongs,
 Makes known the unopposed voice,
 Has named Prince Jusef as its choice.

Through the long night the game has sped,
 Its fate yet undeterminèd.

The Prince is summoned, as 'tis shown,
 E'en from his dungeon to the throne.

Less than the rest does Jusef show
 The rapid leap to weel from woe ;
 Uproarious 'gratulations ring,
 From general voice, to hail the king.
 The Alcade only silence keeps, "
 And mutely hears, and wondering weeps ;
 His heart too full for words, his eyes
 Language his deep felicities ;
 While stealthily dark Ahmeds kiss,
 His garment's folds devoutly press—
 A symbol of the earnest faith
 In the new being that he hath.
 "Next to the throne, Alcade, stand !
 Brother in heart, be such in hand ;
 Thy diamond soul abides the fire ;
 Thy gold comes purer from its ire :
 And, when the cares of State will let,
 We'll play the unended game out yet."

HIGHLAND PRIDE.

COMMEND me to that snug conceit
 That wraps itself so nice and warmly,
 In self-sufficiency complete,
 To brunt all exigencies calmly ;
 That ne'er conceives that number one
 (Which is its own especial figure)
 Can be out-valued, or outdone,
 Or dream of any item bigger ;
 Which carries self-complaisant mail,
 Armed, *cap-à-pie*, for all occasions,
 And marches like the housèd snail,
 Shielded without from all invasions.

A story runs of such a man,
 Of the old haughty Highland leven ;
 But of what "Mac," or "Vic," or "Clan,"
 No full particulars were given :
 Whom some necessity uncouth
 Had summon'd from his native glen,
 Into the plodding Saxon South,
 To mingle with the Lowland men ;
 And in the room, well-nigh replete,
 Were gathered guests, perhaps a score ;
 And it so chanced a vacant seat
 Was only left close to the door ;
 Where for awhile, unnoticed quite,
 He sat in stately condescension,
 Deigning no glance, to left or right,
 Giving, not challenging, attention.
 His faithful henchman humbly stood,
 Respectfully, some pace behind him,
 In mute obedience to his mood,
 Passive as spell, or charm, could bind him.
 At last a lull of conversation
 Allowed attention to be taken
 Of the new-comer's situation,
 So solitary and forsaken :
 The president—a cordial body—
 Full of the milk of human kindness,
 Tempered with sundry swigs of toddy,
 Reproaches their unsocial blindness :
 "A stranger, gentlemen ! arise, '
 Make way for him, that he may come
 And join our socialities
 Here, at the top part of the room.
 Will you, sir, condescend to take
 A side with us, in friendly fashion,
 And of what there's forenint partake,
 On this convivial occasion ?"
 The Highlander made no reply,
 But gave his lip a scornful curl,
 And asked, in Gaelic, carelessly :
 "Angus, what said the Saxon churl ?"
 The Gillie, who some Saxon knew,
 Translated, " 'Tis their wish you come,
 And as they all are doing do,
 There, at the top part of the room."
 The Gael looked red, and wrath, and stiff,
 And knit his brows with indignation ;
 Vented a grünt, and then a sniff,
 In answer to the invitation.
 "Angus ! inform the Sassanach
 That where your chieftain takes his chair,
 To right, or left, at front, or back,
 The *top part* of the room is *there*."

THE OLD ABBEY.

*(Lines written on Viewing the Abbey and Norman Tower of Bury
St. Edmund's.)*

CRUMBLE ! ah, crumble ! ye mouldering walls,
 Decay ye battered towers,
 Where the artful, weaving spider crawls,
 And the clustering ivy flowers ;
 Where the fluttering bat is housed by day,
 And the hermit lizards creep,
 And the crouching toad encased may stay
 A century's round, asleep.
 Thou hast drunk the dews of a thousand years,
 And the flaws of as many borne ;
 Yet still thy sturdy head uprears,
 Though rugged and weather-worn.
 Though the newness thy masonry could boast
 Hath yielded to other guise,
 And thy storm-stained front the freshness lost
 To the tasteless gazer's eyes :
 Methinks thou, in thy hoary pride,
 Thy proper mien dost wear,
 Thy sturdy frown that blasts deride,
 That like vex'd furies tear.

Let the spring and summer boughs look gay,
 In their gaudy verdure dress'd ;
 But thou art constant, old, and grey,
 And frowns become thee best.

Thou are not so grim as the orbless scone,
 Of the architect who plann'd ;
 Nor the bleach'd bones of the serf that once
 Toiled to make thee so grand ;
 Nor the wreck of the mortal tenement
 That enshrined thy founder's mind,
 Of which not now a lineament
 The worm hath left behind.

Monarchs that trod thy marble floor,
 Barons in blazoned cloths,
 Bishops that sacred vestures wore,
 Have flitted away like moths ;
 Proud dames, whose dazzling beauty won
 The belted knight's fond vow,
 Are regardless, aye, as the homely one
 Who drudged and milked her cow.

The abbot in sacerdotal clad,
 And the meek ascetic pale
 (The devout are gone where the spirits glad,
 But the mummers with fiends to wail) ;
 The dizen'd page, self-satisfied,
 With his plum'd bonnet rare ;
 Whose young conceit believed he spi'd
 Love in the eyes of his laydie fayre.
 And the sandal'd pilgrim bending low,
 To his saint in the nitch'd wall,
 And the soul-struck penitent felon too
 In the close confessional.

All have long slept the dreamless sleep ;
 Their sealed doom no hand can break ;
 No, the deep secret each must keep
 Till God's trump bids the dead awake.

Blessed ! Blessed are the merciful ! Workers of good !
 Assuagers of sorrow ! The hearts pure and meek !
 Who ne'er wrongly have robb'd the lone orphan of food,
 Nor caused widows to drink the salt tear from her cheeks.
 But woe to the dealers of scathe and deceit,
 To the perjured, the hypocrite, bloody in mind,
 In whose nostrils the gore of the victim was sweet,
 And whose tread left the moaning of anguish behind ;
 It were better for him that his mother had howl'd
 O'er his corse in his cradle—aye, better by far,
 Than he grow up to manhood to be so befouled
 In bigotry, hatred, ambition, or war.

Why should your masonry flourish ? Why ?
 For your destiny's clearer, I ween ;
 Why the time shall come when no passer-by
 Shall dream thou hast ever been ;
 When the shoeless beggar's foot may shake
 Thy cumb'ring mire from its weary sole ;
 And thy once beauteous tracery make
 Mire for some fetid puddled hole ;
 And thy scattered atoms drifted be,
 Hither and thither, as winds shall will,
 Clinging to leaves of the wayside tree,
 Ploughed in the furrow, drowned in the rill.

Time is the conqueror still of all ;
 You wage a battle, weak and vain ;
 His—in the list of our mundane ball—
 Is the mighty arm that wins the main.

THE COUNTRYMAN & THE COMEDIAN.

WITHIN the hearing of the chimes
 Of Coventry's tri-steepled fane
 Three actors, once upon a time,
 Were overtaken by the rain,
 Which, most malapropos, came down
 To interrupt their purposed ramble,
 When back towards the ancient town
 (Or city) they began to scramble.
 But a new deluge could not damp
 The flame of laughter-loving revel
 That burnt within the comic scamp,
 An irrepressive, merry devil,
 Who at a funeral would joke,
 And in the very "ribs of death"
 His unawed witticisms poke,
 And tickle Gloom to show his teeth.

As they ran onward helter-skelter
 They came upon a peasant, who
 Had sought a temporary shelter
 Beneath a thorn's protecting bough.
 "Rebellion lay in Falstaff's way ;"
 And so he found it ; and temptation,
 With irresistible array,
 Met Momus now in self-same fashion.
 A rustic is a butt so suiting
 For wit and banter to let fly at,
 And promises such pretty shooting,
 Or such a snug and safe cock-shy-at.
 The funny man proclaimed a halt,
 And, mugging, signed that he would take on
 Himself, sans e'er a grain of salt,
 To chaw-up this demure chaw-bacon.

With eyebrows screwed to comic trim,
 And mouth grotesquely pulled awry,
 His seedy hat raised by the brim,
 His body bent salutingly,
 Thus spake the pungent Thespian minion :
 " Dear sir, I really can't refrain
 From asking your sincere opinion ;
 Do you believe that it will rain ?"

The rustic grinned with all his phiz ;
 Each feature shared its due proportion ;
 For his the genuine *comic vis*,
 That needed not a forced distortion ;

But with the ready answer quick,
 And a bright twinkle of the eye—
 As the steed answers to the prick—
 The bantered bumpkin made reply :
 “ How long au yow left granny’s school ?
 A fellow need’nt travel fur
 To learn to know a gurt Tom-fool,
 Who thinks hissen a conjuror ;
 Thou’rt not a mort too cute e’fegs,
 If truth mun be at all times spoken.
 Learn this : when yow see shells of eggs
 You mun make sure, eggs have been broken ! ”

THE WINDS.

Who is the unceremonious rover,
 Announcing his advent in boisterous roar,
 And howling, and rolling, the bleak moorland over,
 Like a bully ungraciously bruiting his power ?
 Through the leafless plantation he’s hissing and crashing ;
 Now the hinges and bolts of the portal he’s shaking,
 And onward and onward is plunging and dashing.
 Who ? What can he be that this riot is making ?
 The wind ! the wind ! the wind !

“ Who is the castelain ? Shuts he the doorie thus
 On the messenger sent from the merciless North ?
 Hear my voice, and admit me. I’m Boreas ! Boreas !
 I’m angry and strong. Dread my wrath ! Dread my wrath !
 My steed is fierce, curbless, and reinless ; I’m weary.
 My hissing and roaring and panting give warning.
 If you bar me thus out from your ingle so cheery,
 Of the leagues upon leagues I must whirl o’er ere morning.
 The wind ! the wind ! the wind !

“ Hear’st thou not ? Wouldst thou tempt me the fast’nings to scatter ?
 The copings and roofings and gables to shiver ?
 The chimney stacks, shoots, and abutments to shatter ?
 I’m a helpful ally, but a merciless driver.
 I can’t stop ; I must enter, or onward must rattle.
 I’m the Tempest’s outrider, that follows close after,
 With a legion of fiercer than I, to give battle.
 They’ll fill you with tremors, from basement to rafter.
 The wind ! the wind ! the wind !

" 'Tis my outspoken bluntness, unfeigned, that alarms you.
 I'm rough, noisy, uncomplaisant, scorning to flatter,
 Like the baby-breath'd West, whose weak whisperings charm you,
 Or her lachrymal Southerly sister. No matter !
 I'll scatter your flocks ; I'll uproot your plantations ;
 I'll unroof your farmsteads. Your milldams, I'll break them ;
 And your sea-going ships, bearing, kin, kind, relations,
 I'll rend them, and sink them, and drive them, and wreck them.
 The wind ! the wind ! the wind !

" I pass you unwelcom'd, with ban and with warning ;
 For the gorges and caves of the mountains are kinder.
 But the scath I will work you 'twixt now and the morning
 Shall be of my vengeance a bitter reminder ;
 And each time, in future, you hear my oncoming,
 You shall date back, recalling this night of my visit ;
 And the shuddering answer shall be, at my booming,
 To the low voiced inquiry, ' Heaven's mercy ! what is it ?'
 The wind ! the wind ! the wind !"

THE EXCURSION.

AWAY from the smoke, and away from the town ;
 'Mid the green and serene o'er the hill and the down ;
 Through the billowy grass, by the deep-shadow'd wood,
 Skirting the rivulet, crossing the flood ;
 Where the spangly daisy shines out like a star,
 And the poppy vermillions the landscape afar,
 Or the buttercup flaunts in its golden array,
 And the bluebell swings light on its flexible spray,
 And the primrose and violet gem the bankside,
 And the velvety foxglove nods over the tide ;
 Where chirruping sparrows and cushating doves
 Make merry the hedgerows, and tuneful the groves,
 And the fleecy flocks dapple the emerald slope,
 And the plough'd land is big with the husbandman's hopes ;
 Where the burst of the blossom falls faint on the ear,
 And the rustling leaf as it falls in the sear ;
 The boughs, whether festoon'd with quivering green,
 Or spangled with wintry icicle's sheen ;
 Whether Spring, with its young, juicy freshness, may glow,
 Or Summer its ample profusion bestow,
 Or Autumn in labouring fruitfulness teem
 Forth its burden of blessing and bounty, I deem

(Or, bound in its icelocks, and fettered in frost,
 Winter's fleecy snow-mantle be Boreas-tossed)
 It is lovely, and cheering, and healthy, and wise,
 To contemplate its aspect 'neath varying skies ;
 For the heart must expand, and the mind be imbued
 With fresh tints of the beautiful, soft, and subdued ;
 Where each object skyward, or under your feet,
 Or around you on all sides, is rich and replete
 With matter to nourish reflection's fine light,
 And plume the wrapt soul for a loftier flight
 Towards the good, and the pure, and the merciful too ;
 And the spirit, with sensible gratitude, bows,
 With a fervent ovation of bliss, to adore
 The great unveil'd source, the Omnipotent Power.

HOME.

THE pleasures that centre in home
 Are the truest that mortals can know,
 Though no floor of smooth marble, or gold-fretted dome,
 May glitter above or below :
 In the eyes of fond loved ones the charm
 That can make it a palace to me ;
 In their smiles lie my riches ; and how my heart warms
 On their faces contentment to see.

Though without the stern battle of life
 I must fight in, and buffet and bear,
 Where injustice and avarice make up the strife,
 And truth a false visage may wear ;
 Yet my home is a citadel strong,
 Where my spirit securely may rest,
 In the certain delights that can only belong
 To those of such blessings possessed.

May the spirit of love from my home
 Ne'er take flight ; but, with sheltering wings,
 At bed and at board, gently hovering come,
 The most blessed of all blessed things.
 May each look its bright presence make known,
 In each accent its influence breathe,
 And in every slight love-prompted action be shown
 The summer its sunlight can wreath.

THE SILENT SERMON IN THE STREET.

AMIDST a busy city's throng,
 That streams, and darts, and shoulders by,
 Mammon's pursuers sweep along,
 Wrapped in their luring mystery ;
 The gentler deities to wend,
 The eager concourse timid glide,
 As stranger guests, who lonely blend,
 Unmasked, in the saloons of Pride.

Obscurity the holy tire,
 They fold around their angel forms,
 Unblazoned all the mild desire
 That their untiring spirit warms ;
 Their bruitless presences invite
 No notice of their rarity,
 And, all fortuitously, light
 Reveals their gentle charity.

But goodness, like the sightless charm
 Of odours in the floweret's breast,
 Must force perforce exhale its balm,
 So must the kindly soul make blest,
 Regardless of the graceless hand,
 Ungrateful for the liberal boon,
 That slights or wrongs the impulse bland,
 Or treads the fragrant donor down.

One of these gentle ones to-day
 Rose on my path : her look benign
 Stayed my swift course along the way ;
 And her eye's glance arrested mine,
 Though on another object bent :
 And the sweet, piteous, mournful glance
 To age a nameless beauty lent.
 That spelled and fettered my advance.

The ruthless charm on pallid lips
 To beauty's ruin gave a glow,
 As a full moonbeam chastely tips
 A shattered temple's ornate brow :
 And oh ! the mercy-light that shone,
 Like beacons from those eyes of night,
 Constrained my glance to pour upon
 The expression of their heavenly light.

Thin weeds her widowed state proclaimed ;
 Their faded freshness plainly spoke
 That comely neatness closely aimed
 To hide the frets of Poortith's yoke ;
 That nice adjustment of attire,
 So scrupulous in cleanly arts,
 That seems a gift—not to acquire,
 But dowered—to those of better parts.

My summary glance, with rapid ken,
 Conviction forced of neighbourhood,
 So pleasing to the senses when
 We stand in presence of the good :
 And then her soft, directing eye
 Led mine to seek its object too,
 Following its tender scrutiny,
 That first enchained my roving view.

A sightless elder, "poorly led,"
 From door to door made bootless quest,
 With faltering steps and palsied head,
 With darkness, age, and need oppressed ;
 As to denial's chill resigned,
 Each slowly-opened, quick-closed door
 Left an unfruitful hope behind,
 Which he with patient meekness bore.

The absorbed and watchful widow stood
 A witness of each vain request,
 Like statued Pity's saintly mood,
 But breathing Pity heaved her breast ;
 Her attenuated hand—so white—
 Manipulates the black robe's folds,
 And once again the widow's mite
 For the Lord's treasury she holds.

She to my sense appeared to glide,
 Like the embodiment of good,
 Till by the sightless beggar's side
 She silently and calmly stood :
 A gentle touch upon his arm,
 A glance into his features wan ;
 The holy coin dropped in his palm,
 She, like a saintly dream, was gone.

A sermon's length of precepts trite,
 In presence of one virtuous act,
 Is light in influential might
 As fiction is to ponderous fact :
 In doubtful tracks the wanderer lost,
 And from his destined point astray,
 In lieu of the fixed finger-post,
 Prefers the guide to show the way.

"Go thou and do as she has done"
 Was fixed within my brooding mind ;
 "Nor emulate the act alone,
 But foster, too, the spirit kind."
 Be bless'd, thou tender-minded one,
 Exempling such benign regard !
 Thy gentle deed, in secret done,
 Shall openly receive reward.

YOUTH, AGE, AND TIME.

TIME kept a peepshow. Age and Youth
 Would look on Life, and learn the truth.
 Time judged his state so well, he knew
 His clients' unassisted view
 Would render each dissatisfied,
 So each a tinted glass supplied—
 The youth's of warm and rosy dye,
 The elder's clouded artfully:
 Time knew the old, familiar tale,
 "Youth loves to laud, Age learns to rail."

Youth was in ecstasies, and swore
 He'd never seen such sights before.
 When Age was asked, "What 'twas about?"
 He sighed, "It is a dark look-out."
 Conflicting evidences raised
 Puzzled the curious. Blamed and Praised!

To satisfy conjectures, many
 Would judge themselves, and paid their penny.
 Thus Time his certain profit made,
 And carried on a roaring trade.

THE WALK IN THE STORM.

OUT on the cliff in the driving rain,
 Breasting the sturdy stress of wind,
 Why should I needlessly remain,
 And leave the fire-lit room behind?
 All's warmth and cosy comfort there;
 Here all is cold, and wild, and bleak;
 And yet some humorous restlessness
 Has thrust me out to brave the wreck.

Let me tie down my oilskin hat,
 And button up my dreadnought thick;
 Guarded with greaves and clumpen shoon,
 To fender out the weather's trick;
 The wind may buffet me in wrath,
 The rain may batter on my front;
 Bending to meet them, I stride on,
 And chuckle at their harmless brunt.

Benumbed at first, the torpid blood
 Seemed chilled, and checked its nimble flow ;
 But action's efforts kindle warmth,
 And all my veins are now aglow :
 With every breath and every stride
 A keener joy appears to mingle ;
 And all my frame, from sole to crown,
 Is in a brisk, delightful tingle.

I skirt the steep ascending cliff,
 Gullied by rain-fed turbid flows ;
 And ever mounting till I stand
 On the brusque promontory's close :
 There wrack, and rain, and wind, and whur,
 Unlet, unite their revels wild ;
 And the deep neather " salt-sea wash "
 Transcends its halcyon moments mild.

Hark to the breakers' hollow boom,
 As Neptune's ceaseless batteries ply
 Against old 'Tellus' giant ribs
 Their hydropult artillery ;
 Hark to the shingle's fusillade,
 Along the shifting, shelvy shore ;
 While, on his high redoubt of rock,
 He frowns, contemptuous of their power.

And, as the parasites of wasting war,
 The winged *ravageurs* exult with glee,
 And hover over and around the strife,
 Waiting the carnage of the surging sea ;
 The spray, like wreathing battle smoke,
 Rolls up and scuds before the driving blast,
 As watery hopes, forlorn, rush on and break,
 Like wasted legions to destruction cast.

Oh puny wars, and strifes of puny men !
 Oh dwarf hostilities of human sources !
 What insignificance ineffable
 To giant natures aye contending forces !
 These lines of constant strife, that endless are
 As is th'encompassed earth's round watery zone,
 That from creation's morn have stood opposed,
 And yet directed by one will alone.

LANGUAGE OF THE EYE.

THERE is a language whose expression
 In all climes known and freely used,
 Is one of mankind's best possessions,
 The gift by nature self-infused ;
 It speaks in silence, swiftly tells
 What other language cannot try ;
 No mortal can resist the spells
 Found in the language of the eye.

What volumes in its quick dilations,
 Its gentle beam—what meanings fair ;
 It can convey the declarations
 Of thoughts the tongue durst not declare :
 But there's a glance for potent meaning—
 All glances else so far above—
 Both heaven and earth are to be seen in
 That all of all—the glance of love.

SHORT AND SWEET.

'TIS the heart's peculiar fashion,
 When emotion's flood runs high,
 To condense its copious passion
 Into potent brevity :
 But its pure interpretation
 Is so clear to comprehend,
 That no quaint elaboration
 Could equal force to utt'rance lend.

What than "Welcome !" can be stronger
 When cherished friends, long severed, meet ?
 Art might fashion phrases longer ;
 Could it utter one more sweet ?
 Speaks it not of bygone thinkings,
 And of present ecstasies ?
 Speaks it not of future linkings
 Of the heart in closer ties ?

And, if adverse claims must sever
 Souls that would chord sweet harmony,
 Impelled, like waters of one river,
 Through diverse channels to the sea,
 The valediction that the best
 Concentrates all that words could tell,
 Expires from out the surcharged breast,
 In "Heaven bless you !" or "Farewell !"

WHAT IS THE SPELL ?

WHAT is the spell that so entrances
 When I stand within thy presence,
 Setting my pulse in trembling dances ?
 'Tis of bliss the sweet quintessence—
 All joys above !

If thy features I dissever,
 They no high perfection show ;
 Yet no human face has ever
 Had the power to charm me so.
 The spell is love.

What the source of that sweet feeling,
 At thy hand's soft contact given,
 Thrilling me, vibrating, stealing
 Through my frame, like sparks from heaven,
 To search and prove ?

Skins textured, hued as soft and snowy,
 Ne'er filled my veins with such wild glow.
 What is the magic influence, trow ye,
 That has power to stir me so ?
 The magic's love.

Is it that in the deep, calm clearness
 Of thy soft, transparent eye,
 I see a pearl of such pure dearness
 Down in thy soul unown'ed lie,
 Peeping above ?

Tempting the gazer on the treasure
 To plunge and lift it from its bed,
 And for his daring taste the pleasure
 The prize would o'er his being shed.
 That pearl is love.

ROSETTA'S SECRET.

ROSETTA sits at the casement,
 Feigning some knitwork's care !
 And the delicate new-mown hay's scent
 Is enbalming the evening air ;
 And the green, crisp-leaved convulvuli
 Sway, rocking the brown honey-bees ;

And the roseate glow of the summer sky
 Is tinting the spire and the trees ;
 And soft and cool the shadows fall
 Across the dusty lane,
 And slowly mount the grass-grown wall,
 And lengthen along the plain.
 And Rosetta often turneth her eye
 From her work, and her hands stand still ;
 And a flash of some inward mystery
 Breaks through her feigning will,
 And gives the lie to the mimic air
 Of nonchalant heedlessness ;
 And you can't help suspecting Rosetta sits there
 For some motive she wouldn't much like to confess.

Gay gossiping voices sound below ;
 But perhaps a voice in her heart
 Is more alluring to listen to,
 In her chambered silence apart ;
 Or perhaps—hold, shameless ! Wouldst thou peep,
 Like a poor, vulgar, paltry spy,
 Into the hallowed silence deep
 Of a young heart's wrapped mystery ?
 Lay bare the soft, enfolded nest
 In the green and tender shade,
 Where, for the nurseling of her breast,
 She a downy bed hath made ;
 Deeming within that sacred nook
 No searching eye could peer,
 With cruel and obtrusive look,
 On the fluttering tenant there ?

Why should we wonder she sits alone ?
 If alone 't can be said to be,
 To enjoy a throng of such charms, and own
 Such numerous sights to see ;
 For there's no lack of sounds and sights
 Of beauty and minstrelsy
 To feed her soul with calm delights,
 Or to foster tranquil reverie.

It may be the incense of summer bloom ;
 Or the music of summer birds ;
 Or the cadence soft of even's boom—
 More sweet than idly-spoken words ;
 Or the bland and soothing atmosphere ;
 Or the sun-lit, fleecy clouds,
 Drifting along the ether clear
 In freckled, fleet-like crowds ;
 Or the luscious glow of lucid green,
 And red, and yellow, and blue,
 That forms her quivering lattice screen,
 With the sunbeams darting through ;

Or the bleat of the sheep, or the faint click-clack
 Of the mill-wheel far away ;
 Or the loud huzzah from the new-made stack
 Of sweet-breathed clover hay.
 And yet it appears 'tis not any of these
 That claim or retain her care,
 Nor their combination suave appease
 A certain restless, longing air
 Of something looked for, but yet delayed ;
 But in expectation as sweet
 As the scent of the flowers and the bright array
 Of forms and of colours so meet.
 Well, then—and yet, no, I can't refrain ;
 The temptation is stronger than I ;
 And there's always a vague, indescribable pain—
 Though I don't know exactly why—
 In a secret you've won by surprise or by stealth ;
 And it hangs like a weight or a care—
 Like the fear of the miser who pines o'er his wealth,
 Which is worthless if no one can share.
 Well, then, you must know—but be sure you don't
 To any one else what I tell ; [name
 For I really conceive it a scandalous shame
 To betray the dear's secret. But—well—
 You must know that a certain young, fresh-looking
 Whose initials are W. A., [wight,
 Rides past in the morning—returning at night—
 Every Taperton market-day ;
 And by a coincidence, strange as 'tis true,
 At the time of his riding this way
 She's sure to have one thing or other to do
 At the casement to cause her to stay—
 To be drawing the curtain, or dusting a cup,
 Or folding a kerchief or gown ;
 And his eyes are certain to be looking up
 Just as hers chance to be looking down ;
 And the mutual glance of those two pair of eyes,
 And the shy, irrepressible smiles,
 First gave me the clue to the secret that lies
 Enshrined in Love's innocent wiles.
 And you know this is Taperton market-day ;
 And now you have only to learn
 That this very morning young W. A.
 Rode there, and, of course, must return ;
 And that's why Rosetta sits, feigning to knit,
 In such coquettish privacy ;
 And you'll see that there she'll continue to sit
 Till young W. A. rides by.

AL FRESCO.

BRIGHT boughs, green boughs, cool and shady,
 Sparkling now in the radiant May-day,
 Flashing and glancing pure emerald hues ;
 Kissing the sunlight, and drinking the dews ;
 Budding, and spreading, and waving, and dancing ;
 The charms of the groves and the meadows enhancing ;
 Screened in thy labyrinths, feathery choristers,
 Trill forth their happiness, musical foresters !
 Chirruping, carolling, fluttering, sweet to hear,
 Billing and filling with music the list'ner's ears ;
 Charming and balming the playfully gentle breeze,
 Hanging in mid-heaven glittering canopies,
 Kindly providing a natural screen
 To ward off the heat of the summer-sun's sheen.
 Gladly I welcome you, sadly I part from you,
 City nor palace could e'er win my heart from you ;
 Hand of a mortal ne'er fashion'd nor planned,
 Aught half so beautiful, aught half so grand ;
 So inspiring, untiring, unfailing in cheering,
 So sweet to the senses of seeing and hearing ;
 To the weary or cheery, the rich or the needy,
 The scholar or hind, the profuse or the greedy,
 You spread forth your arms, full of life and variety,
 Inviting to joy that is free from satiety,
 Sparkling now in the radiant May-day.
 Green boughs, bright boughs, cool and shady !
 Gladly I welcome you, sadly I part from you,
 City nor palace could e'er win my heart from you.

SAUCY EYES.

SAUCY and alluring eyes !
 Like insidious beacon ray,
 Tempting with hope's ecstacies,
 But more surely to betray ;
 Flashing with alternate beams,
 That kindle hearts to loving fire ;
 Repulsing next with icy gleams,
 That freeze to death all fond desire.
 With fallacious tempting sheen,
 That draws you in their danger's scope,
 With promise of delight serene,
 Fostering blissful dreams of hope ;

Advance in confidence to warm,
 Or light you in their mocking rays ;
 Delight expires in terror's qualm,
 Before their basiliskine gaze.

Now, like meridian beam of spring,
 Nursing the fructuous seeds of love ;
 Then, like a frost-blast withering,
 The tender early-bourgeon'd grove ;
 Flashing with Oriental blaze
 And simulative pleasure's glow ;
 Then cold as hyperborean rays,
 Glass'd from eternal ice and snow.

Dower'd with power to yield such joy,
 Why was the baleful instinct given
 To mingle keen Despair's alloy
 With transports, making earth seem heaven ;
 By cruel contrast of delight,
 Intensifying sorrow's pain ;
 Entrancing first with radiance bright,
 Then casting into night again ?

To madden and to tantalise,
 To melt and indurate by turn ;
 With diametric agonies,
 To raise, to crush, to freeze, to burn ;
 Angel and fiend appear to reign
 Incarnate in one single breast,
 And either potently maintain
 Their power to make you cursed or blessed.

THE STORM.

HE holds them in his hand !
 To him what seemeth good
 Is fittest, be it on the land,
 Or on the stormy flood.
 We, snugly housed, suspend the breath,
 And list the elemental din,
 Visioning images of death
 On the vexed waves, that race and spin,
 Obedient to His power,
 At this wild midnight hour.
 The storm king's legions fierce
 Make raid the region through,
 With bolts that crash, and winds that pierce,
 And wrath that mortals rue ;

The burthened ships, like feather toys,
 He tosseth for his sport in air,
 And with destructive howling joys
 He strips the wooded mountain bare,
 And leaves a fatal mark
 Along his passage stark.

What ship-boy's mothers now
 An anguished vigil keep?
 What seamen's spouses bow
 In suppliant prayer and weep?
 And do not sweet home visions loom
 ' The shipman's sturdy spirit through,
 As, chorused by the tempest's boom,
 He does his feats of "deering do,"
 And nerves his heart anew
 From the sweet mental view?

Powerless to help or save,
 Yet forced to feel and fear,
 Only is left in ruth to crave
 Thy mercy may be near:
 That not the ocean's oozy bed
 Their unmarked resting-place may be,
 But later, 'mid their kindred dead,
 'Neath holy ground and waving tree;
 There, where their kin may come,
 To plant flowers on their tomb.

ALKORAN.

I READ of fable and romance,
 In days of Arab ignorance;
 And dreamily and idly scan
 From page to page of Alkoran:
 Now of the pagan Arab's pride,
 Who caused his camels to be tied—
 Foodless and drinkless—to his tomb,
 Lest he should, in the life to come,
 To the degrading shame be put
 To pass t'eternity on foot,
 And show scant at the grand inspection
 Of the last general resurrection.
 Of goddesses and idols strange,
 Of heathen creeds and spirits change,
 In many an odd and mystic process,
 Translation or metempsychosis;
 So tempting, and so much suggestive
 Of fancies serious or festive.

Of this meandering occult
 The following is the poor result—
 If that “result” be not too wide
 A term to such to be applied.

OSCÛNI.*

In the dun, crepuscule light,
 Deep’ning into gradual night,
 Cypress shadows casting glooms
 ’Mid the lone, lugubrious tombs,
 In the rank-soiled cemetery
 Where the sad Arabians bury,
 I heard a cry—a sound so very
 Strange, mysterious, and dreary,
 Wild and untuny,
 “Oscûni ! Oscûni !”

Why that wild and eager cry,
 Startling in intensity ?
 Does some lonely mourner rave
 O’er a newly-closèd grave ?
 From whom that cry “Oscûni” came,
 The woe-shriek of the lost one’s name,
 For whose perdition, sorrows smart
 Draw those weird accents from the heart ?
 Hark ! “Oscûni !” again,
 ’Tis a spirit in pain !

Rising thoughts of chilly dread
 Round about their influence spread,
 Which dry Reason’s pleadings spurn,
 Longing curiously to learn
 What of mystery or woe
 That strange voice may lead unto ;
 Prying instincts which we own,
 Luring us to the unknown ;
 Each mystic marvel
 Prone to unravel.

Penetrate that alley dern,
 With ghostly gloom and shadows stern ;
 For from that vista issued forth
 That wail of woe, or wreak, or wrath ;
 Thread the dim labyrinth of tombs,
 The haunts of nightly ghouls and gnomes,

* Some believe (that is, in the time of Ignorance, or before the coming of the Prophet) that of the blood near the dead person’s brain was formed a bird named Hâmah, which once in a hundred years visited the sepulchre ; though others say this bird is animated by the soul of him that is unjustly slain, and continually cries “Oscûni, Oscûni!” that is, “Give me to drink,” meaning the murderer’s blood, till his death be revenged, and then it flies away. This was forbidden by Mohammed to be believed.—*Preliminary Discourse to the “Koran,”* by GEORGE SALE, *Gent.*

Where death and solitude unite
 To quell the spirit with affright ;
 And seek to ascertain
 Whence came that wail of pain.

Now the sombre depths disclose
 As the 'sight familiar grows,
 To the dim, umbrageous aisle,
 A solemn, dark, sepulchral pile,
 Round which rank weeds and mosses sprout
 And noxious climbers wind about,
 And dark and sullen vegetation
 Is rampant o'er dilapidation ;
 And 'midst the 'jacent stones
 That voice " Oscûni " croons.

More distinct each moment grow
 The dusky ruins' details now ;
 Keener and more greedily
 Penetrates that hungry cry ;
 And two gleaming balls of light
 Seize and hold the startled sight,
 And 'tis known they're living eyes,
 Wherein fascination lies ;
 Their vivid lustre hath
 The glow of anguished wrath.

'Tis a bird of plume and mien
 Stranger than was ever seen ;
 Gaunt, and spectral, and lean,
 With beak and talons curved and keen ;
 With bat-like, horny-pointed wings,
 And bony legs, with scaly rings ;
 An aspect starved and ravenous
 Surmounting the sarcophagus ;
 The air wildly beating,
 " Oscûni !" repeating.

A groan is heard, a rustling sound,
 A figure rises from the ground,
 Where prone before in grief it lay
 Amid the crumbling tomb's decay :
 His robes are rent in many a shred,
 Ashes and dust are on his head ;
 His face is bowed, his feet are bare,
 Unshaved his beard, unkempt his hair ;
 And louder still is heard
 The scream of that strange bird.

" Ah ! shriek, thou bird of dole ! I own
 Thou justly art impatient grown,
 In fasting for thy drink and food,
 Thy expiatory feast of blood ;

Thy famished frame may aptly vent
 Those madd'ning cries for aliment ;
 Bound will-less to the victim's grave
 Until supplied the draught you crave ;
 Gasping, though deathless, dying,
 Ever ' Oscûni !' crying.

" Thou spirit-bird, born of the brain
 And blood of the unjustly slain,
 Condemned to perch in keen delay
 (While I—the avenger—far away) :
 A sentinel by day and night,
 By the moon's cold or sun's hot light,
 Or the pale asterisms blink,
 And shrieking ever ' Give me drink !'
 Thy cry at last is heard,
 Thou sad and suffering bird.

" My father's blood has dyed the earth,
 And called thee into painful birth ;
 And thy existence is a sign
 Of the unholy, foul design :
 Nor canst thou from thy pain be freed ;
 Thy watch and ceaseless bitter greed
 Must last until my blade or dart
 Has broached the coward slayer's heart ;
 And Hâmah ! thou hast quaffed
 The too-long craved draught.

" Thou shalt not long that nurture lack ;
 I'm on the murderer's blood-stained track ;
 Then thou shalt quit this tomblet's crest,
 And seek some grove of peaceful rest.
 These mournful shades, whose echoes vie
 Thy replicated agony,
 Shall welcome back the birds of song.
 Scared by thy discord hence too long.
 I hasten to assuage
 Thy longing and thy rage."

He has gone to do the work of wreak,
 The frown on brow, the tear on cheek,
 To exact the bitter penalty
 Of tooth for tooth, and eye for eye !
 And now the Hâmah wider flings,
 And fiercer flaps its leathern wings,
 And clappers with its iron beak,
 Shriek rapidly succeeding shriek—
 Discordant, untuney,
 " Oscûni, Oscûni !"

THE TWO TRAVELLERS.

Two travellers sat upon a winter night
 Within the glow of a red sea-coal fire,
 Thrown out by the weird, lurid light
 From the dark wainscot's shadowy retire.
 That day, from a sea voyage long and rude,
 From pent-up shipboard they had come ashore ;
 And years had lapsed since last they viewed
 Its granite cliffs, the ocean beetling o'er.

Whe'er their acquaintance was of ancient date,
 Or by the casual transit newly made,
 There seemed a tie most intimate,
 By numerous trifling signs displayed ;
 Yet was there something marked and strange
 In their incongruous unity,
 As though some late abnormal change
 Had wrought the forced affinity—
 Opposing poles of manly type :
 One rugged, and the other smooth
 One framed for Battle's fiercest gripe,
 The other to assuage and sooth ;
 One bronzed and grizzled, stalwart, wild,
 With eyes of Passion's darkest glow ;
 The other slender-formed and mild,
 With girl-like accents, sweet and low ;
 Yet each possessed one common sign,
 Distinctly traced upon his brow,
 By which 'twas easy to divine
 The chain that interlinked them now.
 It was, in fine, of Sorrow's brand,
 The deep, indubitable scars,
 Like wave lines on the abandoned sand,
 At end of Earth's and Ocean's wars.
 Which was the elder of the two
 Conjecture halted to unfold,
 Faltering the enigma to break through ;
 For both seemed young, and both seemed old.

They sat in silence leaden, deep,
 And with intent abstraction gazed
 Into the spluttering, glowing heap
 That in the ardent ingle blazed ;
 While the red spiral reek upwound,
 Like spirits freed from cumb'ring clay,
 And rumbled, with a dreamy sound,
 Up, up, the chimney far away.
 And on the ceiling and the wall,
 Behind the brooding, silent pair,

Two phantom shadows, bent and tall,
 Like goblin sentries stationed there,
 Flickered and blinked, as if to jeer
 The lucubrious and painful gloom
 That strangely seemed to domineer
 Within that super-silent room.
 But the mute spell at last was raised,
 And the frail stranger's soft, calm eye
 Was turned towards his friend, and gazed
 So intently on his reverie
 That the scared incubus of thought,
 Which on his fellow's memory press'd,
 Fled, and his glance the other's sought,
 As seeking there consoling rest.
 A thin, transparent, wiry hand
 Was stretched across the ingle's glow,
 Which, ere the other's broad palm spanned,
 You saw the firelight glimmer through ;
 And as the night's quiescence lone
 Is waked from slumbering calm profound
 By some remote harmonious tone,
 Casting a sense of pleasure round,
 A thin but dulcet voice relieved
 The tacit dreariness that had reigned,
 Which the sound-famished ear received,
 To list'ning's eagerest tension strained :

" Brother, the All-directing Hand,
 That in minute and vasty things
 Each detail slight, of projects grand,
 To pretermind issue brings,
 Has drifted us, in seeming chance,
 Into a meeting timely well,
 To judge by mortal, casual glance
 Of that which at our meeting fell.
 By early study trained to guess,
 Or vaguely know, of human flaws,
 To soften the acute distress,
 And from effect to trace the cause :
 In absence of more potent skill,
 Foretaught experiences combine,
 Directed by that mighty will,
 To lend a potency to mine.

" The fell malaria's poison-breath
 Had curded up your venom'd blood,
 And over the abyss of death
 You hung, unconscious that the flood—
 Whose dark and awful torrents flow
 Time and eternity between—
 Surged inky in the gulf below,
 Shored by the Is and the Has been.

- " I have seen the picture of a child,
 With gaudy, wild flowers in its lap,
 Standing upon the margin wild
 Of a precipitous and dizzy gap.
 Its awe struck mother, from afar—
 The effigy of blanched despair,
 Transfixed with breathless anguish—saw
 Her cherished darling's peril there.
 Fearful to cry, of motion reft,
 Palsi'd by Terror's icy hand,
 No semblance e'en of life was left.
 A marble woe she seemed to stand,
 But by her fixed gaze unseen ;
 And faintly limned against the sky,
 A guardian form's celestial sheen
 Sentri'ed the suckling watchfully.
 I, through your desperate mortal strait,
 Imaged a potent presence near,
 And schooled my mind to serve and wait,
 In suppliant hope, but trembling fear.
 And when your rescued life was snatched
 From Death's impending icy dart,
 I joyfully the ransom watched,
 And blessed God's mercy from my heart.
- " There is a human, loving pride,
 Born of an anxious, feverish fear,
 Felt by the watcher at a sick one's side,
 That makes the patient to that guardian dear ;
 And every fresh degree of health
 Made under that still guardian's eye
 Is a rich premium in itself,
 To guerdon his humanity ;
 Till that which he hath helped to save
 He after deems his own in part,
 And thinks the *past* a title gave
 To affine the *future* heart to heart.
 A soul's relationship is sown,
 Which roots and shoots and fruits by turn,
 As flowers that pine and droop alone,
 United, thrive in kindred urn.
- " If, then, the deadly conflict past,
 The fierce probation battled through,
 Appears o'er all your face, at last,
 Health's re-invigorating glow ;
 And yet the pain'd, perturbed trace,
 By Care or Sorrow's finger signed,
 In brooding eye and woeful face,
 Indexing malady of mind.
 My healing help seems only part
 (The smaller) of its task t'have done,
 Soothing the tortured body's smart,

Leaving the mind to writhe alone,
 Rung by keen canker-rooted thought,
 Loading with pain each pulsing hour,
 As if internally it sought
 A respite from its racking power.

“ This fleshly tenement is but the shell
 Housing the imperishable tenant soul,
 Whose guardian mind, to do its functions well,
 Should vigilantly tend its self-control ;
 For stealthy sin is, thief-like, lurking near,
 With an insatiable and deathless ire.
 In truceless warfare, on that inmate dear,
 With hateful ardour no delay can tire :
 The body, valued by the immortal soul,
 Is trivial as the fen-engender'd light,
 Flickering a moment o'er the morass foul,
 'Gainst the eternal planet's glory bright.
 A body saved from Death's fell touch
 Is but a temporal respite given ;
 But a soul snatched from Satan's clutch
 Is a new angel leagued with heaven.
 I would not seek to win the human heart
 From human tenderness or loving ties,
 But lead it to compute the better part,
 Reserved for faithful suffering's destinies.
 A mental burden, like material weight,
 May overcharge and break one weary mind :
 Shared by a sympathising, willing mate,
 Relief and rest oppression's sure to find.
 I but repeat the Great One's call,
 To the o'erlaboured and oppressed,
 To share with him their burdens all,
 With promise of assured rest.”

The alluring, soft, persuasive voice
 Subsidised like an Æolian strain,
 Whose last faint whisperings rejoice
 The list'ner till they wake again.
 And he who, with attentive ears,
 Had sat, bound by the harmonious spell,
 Turned to conceal the child-like tears
 That from his trembling eye-lids fell ;
 While a convuls'd, upheaving spasm
 Told of some pent emotion's throe
 Struggling for a relieving chasm
 For the volcanic strife below.
 The vent was found, the head was bowed,
 And buried in the broad-palmed hand ;
 And the rude stranger wept aloud,
 Abandoned of all self-command.
 And 'twas a strange and touching sight—

Strength thus by feebleness subdued ;
 This victory of moral might
 And gentle tact o'er spirit rude.
 A bright, compassionate, and tender gleam
 Shone in the fragile one's benignant eye.
 'Twas easy at a glance to deem
 Him Faith, or Hope, or Charity,
 Watching the strife that there ensued
 With pride and shame in common part,
 Against the winning lure that woo'd
 To unburden that o'erladen heart.
 The wavering mental balance swayed
 Alternately from Yes to No ;
 But scruples were by love outweighed,
 Which forced the beam at last to bow.
 The head was raised, the heaving chest
 Discharged a heavy, laboured sigh,
 The clutched hands were close compress'd,
 The hoarse voice faltered shamedly.

“ A moment's space is fraught with doom
 Or blessing to some fated souls,
 Which forms the pattern in the loom,
 From whence life's fabric thence unrolls.
 The chance of life, though idly thrown,
 May cloud or brighten all the rest ;
 And the first fatal keynote's tone
 Induces bliss, or makes unblest.
 Seldom I trust myself to speak
 Or ponder on the darkened past ;
 I feel my non-resistance weak,
 But from the contest shrink aghast.
 But there are natures that impose
 A trust, and claim a confidence ;
 The portals of the heart unclose,
 And let the prisoned secret thence.
 This spell of yours my spirit bends,
 As surcharged branches pliant bow ;
 And grace t'enforced weakness lends.
 That force and frailty feel I now.
 Nor think I that I wrongly deem
 We hold companionship in dole ;
 Chain fellows in one suffering team,
 Fettered by sorrow soul to soul.
 Like mine, yours may not be, 'tis true,
 A grief with mingled rapture blent,
 Like bouque'd slips of funeral yew,
 And spring-tide flowers of dainty scent ;
 The brightest blooms surviving last,
 Sheltered in tender mem'ry vase,
 The sadder's keen oppression past,
 Like signs of some time painful scars.

We casket up with equal care
 The death-enclosing poisoned rings
 And amulets of potency rare,
 As equal-valued treasure things.
 We nurse our bane and pet our bliss,
 Twin nurslings in the self-same cot;
 Careless what good and ill we miss,
 Hugging the ill and good we've got.
 Youth dreams a bright celestial dream
 With beatific glories rife;
 Waking from which he scorns to deem
 Such unprismatic being life.
 Yet his soft, ductile mind may bear
 Of its first stamp such deep impress,
 It indurating, fixes there,
 Inflexible to future stress.
 As the enthusiast love inspired,
 Of his cold, bloodless, marble bride,
 Once of the honi'd madness fired,
 Adored and unrequited, died.

" But I am wand'ring down the maze
 Of dreamy, moralising thought ;
 So to my tale of early days.
 The interim from then is nought
 But a dim, heavy, neutral range
 Of travel, suffering, and unrest ;
 A feverish yearning after change,
 In each variety unblest'd.

" That which I am no index gives
 Of what in early life I've been ;
 Yet in my mind that lifetime lives
 More vivid than the lapse between.

" My father was a simple hind,
 Whose daily labour made the round,
 In which his being was confined,
 Staked to one changeless tether-ground.
 Letters and books were mysteries,
 Unfathomed of his rustic ken,
 And all external histories
 He took on trust from other men.
 But healthy, temperate, trusty, bland,
 Of warm and tender soul endowed,
 His glass of life ran golden sand,
 His sky knew more of sun than cloud.
 Loved for his manliness and worth
 By one of fairer culture bred :
 Poor, orphan'd, but of gentle birth,
 She yielding ruled, and following led.
 I, their sole child, the centre mark

Of their conjoint and loving aim,
 Of their loves covenant the ark,
 Their stake in life's momentous game.
 Playmate and scholar each by turn,
 Alluring fondness woo'd to prove
 What playful pleasantness it was to learn,
 And with each lesson to inculcate love ;
 I 'neath their kindly nurture grew
 From childhood to maturity ;
 Nor restless yearning fancies knew,
 Bred to the woodman's mystery.
 My parents, home, my dog, my gun,
 My axe, and varied nature's charm ;
 Sport, labour, and some perils run,
 Kept me heart whole and fancy warm.
 Spring, summer, autumn, winter drear,
 By change of duties, lightened toil,
 And kept my body hale and cheer,
 My mind unvexed with passion's coil ;
 As the deep tarn's unruffled breast
 The clear, blue sky's reflection cast,
 My soul reflected cloudless rest,
 But the clouds shadow came at last.
 Thus it befell, and if I seem
 'To have made the ills for which I mourn,
 As well the straw upon the stream,
 May flout the flood on which 'tis borne,
 As powerless 'gainst the impulse strong,
 What whirl'd me in its vortex wild,
 Futile the struggle, right or wrong,
 Resistance ends of strength beguiled.

“ In the beechwood I was plying
 Axe and wedge ; the squire or knight,
 As round I sent the splinter's flying,
 Could not have a heart so light.
 My axe the hissing air dividing,
 Its strokes rung through the woody aisles,
 Through the green-leafy roofing gliding,
 Slant glints of sunbeams now and whiles.
 Then I should rest a time and whistle,
 Or watch my dog Rough's pranks by turns ;
 Eyeing the bee's buzz round the thistle,
 As he lay underneath the ferns.
 Such warm, soft, summer puffs blowing
 Down the waving alleys to me,
 All the warm blood quickly flowing,
 Like a wine stream, briskly through me.
 Not a blackbird nor a linnet
 Singing in the dancing spray
 Had a lighter heart within it
 Than I had on that summer day.

While I worked my thoughts were running
 All on happy, idle things.
 I was too merry to be dunning
 Over any trouble springs;
 But such dreamy, pleasing fancies
 Flitted by me like a cloud,
 As the summer midgefly dances;
 And I know I thought aloud.

“All at once the thought came in me
 That I had never seen nor known
 A lass with look and voice to win me,
 To wish I had her for my own.
 And then I tried in thought to settle
 What like and kind and sort and size;
 If gentle-toned, or full of mettle,
 Fair, brown, the tint of hair and eyes;
 But if I had been given the pow’r
 To fashion one out to my liking,
 I should have puzzled many an hour
 Without a proper balance striking.

“What I had said aloud they know
 Who laughed a soft, light laugh that woke me;
 I turned, and, with shame-burning brow,
 A leaping heart I thought would choak me.

“Two strange ladies—one how bright!—
 With modest laughter in their eyes,
 Close in the sunny summer light,
 Stood smiling at my stunned surprise.
 I say that there were ladies two,
 Both young and lovely as the sun;
 But one had loveliness so new
 I soon could only see that one.

“I never felt ashamed, afraid,
 Before a lady or a squire;
 Now like a guilty, self-betrayed,
 I stood, and through my veins ran fire.

“I’ve passed the lonely churchyard through
 When midnight toll’d the spirit hour;
 I’ve roamed the dreary moorland blue
 In night storms where the gibbets lower;
 I’ve brought the desp’rate poacher in
 From deadly grapple in the wood;
 I’ve plunged into the boiling lynn
 To save a shepherd from the flood.
 When the flames swallowed up the Hall,
 And the whole blazing stairway fell,
 And bore me in its fiery thrall,
 I felt no fear, no spirit’s quell;
 But as I stood with pow’rless tongue,

And all but pow'rless eyes and thought,
 Staring on her with heartstring's wrung,
 I felt all fear myself a nought.
 And when the woods awoke to hear
 The rill-like murmur of her voice,
 Which she unloos'd, as though to clear
 My troubled shame, I had no choice,
 But stood in pain'd, silent awe,
 My heart o'erflooded with hot tears ;
 And she whom ne'er before I saw
 I felt I had loved a thousand years.

" She little spake, she stayed not long,
 Some words of harmony supreme,
 Like softly-murmured fairy song,
 Heard in ecstatic spring tide dream.
 I gave—or thought I gave—reply
 In stammering and bewildered shame ;
 And, like the wild bee's melody,
 She passed as quickly as she came.

" The drifting wretch upon a spar,
 Watching the quick receding sail
 Sink down the dim horizon far,
 With hope extinguished, well may quail.
 So ran the cold and sick'ning thrill
 Vibrating through my dizzy frame,
 And blankness spread o'er thought and will ;
 And life was only life in name.
 The day wore out, the night grew old,
 The stars gleamed on the midnight air,
 Grey morning spread along the wold,
 And found me dumbly seated there.

" Years have since fled my raven hair ;
 Has grizzled now, and thinner grown ;
 My form is shaken with the wear
 And tear of contests I have known
 On flood and field, but never yet
 In crowds nor in the wilderness,
 'Mid stormy buffets that beset
 A life so fruitful of distress,
 Doing so much and suffering more
 Could I the rooted memory chase
 Of that short woe-fraught summer hour,
 When spoke that voice and passed that face.

Written during the winter of 1855-56.

ACROSTIC.

 TO MY WIFE.

CELESTIAL beings may be bright ;
 Heaven is their fit abode ;
 And we sojourners on the earth
 Require them of another mode.
 Loving and lovable, to make
 Our heart and home's sure blessing ;
 True angels, not fantastic things ;
 Too aerial to endure caressing,
 E'en such as now my hand is pressing.

May those dear eyes continue still
 E'en thus to light and warm my heart.
 Ah ! vain are words to tell the bliss,
 Dear Charlotte, you to me impart.

Nov. 5th, 1851.

PROCRUSTES.

PROCRUSTES was an Attic thief,
 A most facetious robber chief,
 Whose style of trial was more curi-
 -Ous than our system is by jury.
 He owned a bed—a perfect treasure—
 Supposed to be the standard measure ;
 On which whatever luckless wretch
 He nabbed it was his wont to stretch ;
 If he was shorter, by sheer strength,
 They jerked him to the standard length ;
 But, if his length was in excess,
 By just so much they made him less ;
 So, when some fore-condemned wight
 Can't be with cankered sensor's right,
 In metaphor 'tis curtly said,
 They stretch him on Procrustes' bed.

JINGLE.

OFt I've wondered, ofT I've pondered,
 In delight and in dejection,
 On the might and on the blight
 That ever meet the watchful sight,
 In open day or shrouded night,
 Huddled in such close connection,

Side by side, upon the tide
 Of this delightful, sightful, frightful,
 Pleasure-seeking, spirit-breaking,
 Wealthy, filthy, ambling, scrambling,
 Shouldering, edging, squandering, cadging,
 Bubble-blowing, stupid, cunning,
 Custom-hunting, money-dunning,
 Earnest, canting, sluggish, panting,
 Virtuous, evil, saucy, civil,
 Changing-sea, mirth, misery,
 Despair, and fun, roll'd into one.
 Here an evangelic preacher,
 There a stentor'n dying-speecher ;
 Now lace-bedizened plenipoes,
 Then serenaders, black as crows,
 Who chant "Where the good nigger goes ;"
 Gilded State-coaches, funeral hearses,
 Shabby nabobs, swells minus purses,
 Peers of the realm settling a prizefight,
 Snobs doing the divine by gaslight.
 (Lights of the world like these may boast
 "You'll always find us at our post.")
 These sights, so cheery and so dreary,
 Puzzle and make the spirit weary.
 Like a wind-driven feather toss'd,
 'Tis in the wild confusion lost,
 Of heterogeneous human hodgepodge
 That live, starve, strut, and skulk and lodge
 In hole and corner, lane and street—
 Crescent and square for the *élite*—
 This wilderness of bricks and mortar,
 With sooty air and muddy water,
 Where crowds make wealth, and crowds are undone,
 Sung, painted, named, and known as London.

FLOWERS AND FEELINGS.

EDITH, I clearly recall the time,
 On that summer Sunday warm,
 When the sunlight beauty mantled all
 In its robe of varied charm.
 But the outward glow of the summer sky
 Was not so bland and bright
 As the fervid hope of the heart within,
 Basking in love's serener light.

I remember, too, the chosen flowers,
 Of dazzling and delicate hue,
 That I with such pride and care had culled,
 And brought as a present for you.

And I better remember the sweet, sweet smiles,
 And the words of soft, silvery tone,
 That repaid me in thanks for the blooming gift
 As a grateful and welcome one.

But, with the sunshine of that fair day,
 And those flowers and words and smiles,
 Lingers the trace of prophetic fears
 And foreshadows of subsequent wiles.
 The first faint throb of the germ of doubt,
 That time has to certainty brought ;
 And I think of the words as the words of a seer,
 Which then spoken engendered the thought.

I wonder if thou hast retention as I
 Of that labour-worn, elderly man,
 With the dull city-dwellers bejaded look,
 And the visage so sallow and wan,
 Whom we met on the field-path languidly
 Sauntering along in the light of the sun,
 And paused as if spelled by the charm of the flowers,
 And asked, " Could you spare him but one ?"

And a mournful humour in his eye
 Chide you there with a mild regard,
 That seemed to say, for saying him nay :
 " I may be bold, but you are as hard ;"
 And he said : " You seem dearly to prize them now,
 But remember how soon they'll decay :
 To-day you're unwilling to give me but one,
 But to-morrow you'll throw all away."

As with the flowers, I feel to day
 It is with all those choicer blooms
 Of hopes and thoughts and feelings pure,
 Whose wraith-like memories mark their tombs.
 All that seemed then beloved and prized,
 With being and with soul combined,
 Thou hast grown indifferent to, and cast
 Heedless to wither on the wind.

EROS* AND ANTEROS.†

WHEN young Dan Cupidon was born
 He was his mother Venus's joy,
 And for his rosy childish charms
 She doted on the pranksome boy.
 But soon it irked her mother's heart,
 That, spite his nature, shrewd and warm,

* Love.

† Mutual love.

And his deep, subtle, mental power,
That he retained his baby form.

As time sped on, and brought no change,
Her disappointment would have vent.
In Themis'* august ear she poured
Her deep, complaining discontent :
That goddess, skilled in Nature's laws,
Consoled the deeply-anxious mother,
And remedied sad Venus' lot
By giving Love a godly brother.

When Anteros (young mutual love)
Was born sweet Eros waxed and grew ;
His wings expanded, and his frame
Mature and lusty feelings knew.
But oh the fate ! If Anteros
E'er ceased beside him to remain,
He dwindled to his former state,
And straight became a child again.

So Love alone grows weak and sad,
And wanes despondently to yearn ;
But, strengthened by a mutual frame,
The dual ardours brightly burn,
And being is invested with
The conscious charms of strong delight ;
For self blends with some second self,
And bliss attains to human height.

MATCHES.

THINGS scarce and costly most we prize,
Not for the blessings they confer,
But—for they seldom meet the eyes,
And therefore, idly, we prefer
To let our fancy ling'ring brood,
Dreaming them into false esteem,
And cheaply hold the sterling good,
For its simplicity, I deem.

Ah ! *Ecci Signum !* here's a case.
A case in point my subject catches
An illustrative line to trace
This case—a box of Congreve matches.
There is more use and worth to man
In these cheap slips of fire-tipped pine
Than all the pearls and rubies can
Make boast of since they first did shine.

* Justice.

What giant consequence of good
 This seeming insignificance might bear—
 This fragile, mean, small cabinet of wood ;
 And its contents, thought at a penny dear,
 Might be to some a treasure even now,
 Worth more than all the gems of gorgeous Ind —
 Set once again the frozen blood in flow
 Of wretches in some Arctic region pin'd.

Wanting the means this little thing would give,
 How many precious things would be as nought!
 This might make blank despair wish still to live,
 And fill with joy minds near with woe distraught.
 Health, cheerfulness, and comfort in its train
 This tiny wizard might in turn bestow ;
 Haggard despair and gloom and pain
 Be all subdued beneath its glow.

Yet, not to trace its service great,
 Its helping power in every State—
 In ship at sea, or shed on shore ;
 In farm, or factory, or bower ;
 In mine or mart, forest or fort—
 Through evil and through good report,
 It is man's simple servant, friend,
 Willing its aid at call to lend,
 And only asks to be kept dry,
 To burn, to serve, and for him die.

SUNSET: A FRAGMENT.

TOWARDS the purple Western hills,
 Pageanted by clouds of light,
 Robed in crimson tint that fills
 The arch of heaven with fiery spite ;
 Like a bloody despot's end
 Amid his blazing palace sack,
 Whose fall majestic doth transcend
 His life with deeds of horror black ;
 So gorgeous 'mid surrounding piles
 Of burning clouds, like mountains dire ;
 Others, that gleam like molten isles,
 Floating in seas of sulphury fire
 Down, and still down, the gulf of heaven.
 The daygod's hot and panting stud
 Whirl on his car, and, frenzy-driven,
 Course madly through the glittering flood.

WIDOW MAY.

You are in trouble, Widow May,
 And so I've made so bold—d'y-see—
 To call upon you, just to say,
 "Can I of any service be?"
 You'll think me over free, I fear,
 And wonder such a sullen man—
 I know I'm thought so—should come here;
 But I would serve you, if I can.

We've both been strange-like, Widow May,
 Now many years past : that's my loss ;
 But all must know a sunny day,
 And every one must bear a cross.
 If mine came sooner than seemed good,
 Why I—Tush ! how I prattle here
 About myself, which no man should.
 You think me very soft, I fear.

'Tis twenty years now, Widow May,
 Since you and I last spoke together.
 You were a damsel fresh and gay
 As e'er was seen in summer weather.
 I sought to win you, but—I know it—
 Another's looks were, aye, before you.
 My love was strong ; but wherefore show it ?
 I could but hopelessly adore you.

I do not seek you, Widow May,
 To stir the ashes of the past ;
 But friends, who swarm on summer day,
 Are scarce when summer weather's past ;
 And Fortune's freaks are strange and cross,
 Smiling where least 'tis prized or thought,
 And lotting bankruptcy and loss
 Where her bland favours most are sought.

That which I longed for, Widow May,
 Another won, and ne'ertheless,
 In every subsequent essay,
 I've had an easy, clear success :
 Increase of means, but not content,
 For wealth buys not the charm of life,
 Which is of mingled blessings blent—
 Home, love, and children—husband, wife.

You and your good man, Widow May,
 Had these, if Fortune's adverse frown
 In worldly matters brought decay,
 And need pressed thrifty labour down.

Your names the parish rumours quote
 For honest worth and prudent toil,
 And sympathising neighbours note
 How you have been ill Chance's foil.

I take much shame, good Widow May,
 For nursing jealousy and spleen ;
 For cold omission and decay
 To avert the evil that has been ;
 For cropping weeds of bitter growth
 In my heart's garden moodily,
 And leaving to the rust and moth
 Goodwill and helping charity.

But now, though late, good Widow May,
 My better thoughts at last prevail ;
 By friendly aid I would allay
 The loss and sorrow you bewail.
 I would redeem my past offence
 Of sinful apathy, and know
 Of its unhappy consequence
 How my repentance I can show.

I feel already, Widow May,
 A new, a sweet, and pleasing sense
 Of comfort in my breast to-day,
 That springs from humble penitence.
 Of Fortune's gifts I see at last
 The purpose and delicious power,
 And from my mind the darkened past
 Melts in this blessed and bright'ning hour.

August, 1866.

MUSIC.

WHAT is that dread of silence deep,
 The awe-inspiring void,
 That makes the heart's tide coldly creep,
 And life by deadness is alloy'd,
 When the soul, neighbourless and lone,
 Shrinks from the blanky silence drear,
 And sound, though e'er so crude in tone,
 Would be a blessing there to hear ?
 'Tis that the vacuum does not give
 The aliment that makes it live—
 Music, the spirit's feast !

What the recoiling in affright
 It pants with, when concussions dire
 Explode around in horrent might,
 And jangle in Babalic ire,
 The overgorged and palled sense
 Shrinks, conscious of the wild surcharge.
 And flutters in the pain'd suspense
 Upon annihilation's marge?
 'Tis that it cannot bear the great,
 The painfully oppressive weight
 Of sound upon it press'd.

But what, when richly floats around,
 Piercing with sweet and mellow flowing
 The trill of nicely-balanced sound,
 The soul in trance-like rapture throwing,
 Like veils of prism'd radiance o'er
 A list'ning and adoring sprite
 Submitting to the enchanter's power,
 And paying worship for delight?
 'Tis when man's soul and Nature's voice
 Meet upon equal terms by choice,
 In fitting garments dress'd.

TO MARGARET.

ART thou, sweet Margaret, to sadness given?
 It hangs upon thee as the beaded dew,
 Cupped in the lily's breast, or starry heaven,
 That lovelier shows beneath the pallid hue
 Of the cold queen of night
 Than when the sun is bright.

I've watched thee, Margaret, when from thine eye
 The meteor fires of anger have leap'd forth,
 And the grand halos that light up the sky
 Were rivall'd by the beauty of thy wrath;
 And, for the dazzling power
 It lent, I've lov'd thee more.

But when, dear Margaret, the summer mood
 Doth laugh within thine eyes, and on thy lips
 A sweetness richer than the wild bee's food
 Doth place thy witcheries else all in eclipse,
 And thy attuning hand,
 My heart-strings then command.

And well, sweet Margaret, thou kennst thy sway
 As umpire of my happiness or dole.
 My Queen! Whose royalty 'tis bliss to obey,
 High priestess and religion of my soul!
 Whose will, or word, or nod,
 Is next obeyed to God.

ENIGMA.

THERE is not a lady in the land
 Without thy aid could ever be ;
 The name of Lord would lose command,
 And law become a fallacy.
 Letters and learning both would die ;
 Men's lives would not be theirs an hour ;
 Light be extinguished, love would fly,
 And even language lose its power.

 There were no pleasure for the good,
 No ill could be—no old, no lame ;
 There would be neither land nor flood,
 And not a crime could meet with blame.
 All would be swept from off the sphere,
 And not an element remain.
 Nor could an angel drop a tear
 To mourn, thy loss had wrought such pain.

THE ASSASSINATION OF DONNA BEATRICE DE BOVADILLA & DON ALVARO DE PORTUGAL.

IN TWO SCENES.

SCENE I.

A MOOR stole forth from Malaga, invested close by Ferdinand,
 Bent on a stern and startling deed, by vengeful hate maturely planned ;
 For the dimmed star of Granada from heaven had been shaken,
 And one by one its towers and towns the Infidels had taken.
 And Ferdinand and Isabella, in their power and splendour,
 Abdallah el Zagal had forced to treaty and surrender.
 Each foot of soil had drunk the blood of Giaour and Moslem blended,
 The strife of seven centuries for Cross and Crescent ended.
 The dusky feet of Arab kings must trample other regions,
 Despoiled of all they had despoiled, with myriads of spent legions ;
 From Abyla's* sun-bleachèd crest the Moorish glance may stretch in
 vain,
 To Gebal Tarie's† rocky brow, and the reconquered lands of Spain.
 For now they must retrace their way across the Muritanian flood,
 Renouncing all they had won and held, at cost of seas of human blood.
 Their mission'd hosts as strangers now, aliens, must seek the Arab home,
 Whence, locust-like, they did emerge, another great Hegira's come.
 That watery strait must bound from hence, the empire of their rule and
 faith
 For longer on Iberian soil it not a single foothold hath ;

* Abyla and Calpe ; the pillars of Hercules.

† Tarie's Mountain ; the Moorish name for Gibraltar.

That which the scymitar had won internal feud and faction lost,
 And Spain was to the Spanish throne a realm without co-rival crossed.
 Need, then, surprise assail our thoughts that in a nation brought to bay,
 In some distracted hearts of fire the quenchless flames of vengeance
 play?

The sole surviving dart which man, when all is ruin, grasps in hate,
 And, facing sternly to his doom, hurls madly at the brow of fate.
 Who says "the worst that could befall has fallen, and I, reck no more
 To trail the coil of being on, when all the zest of being's o'er,
 And death's embrace would pleasure yield, if in its last convulsive throes
 My missioned hand might reach and lay some proud, exultant foeman
 low."

Such were the fiery thoughts that seethed beneath the calm but sullen
 brow

(As some volcano's top may show a cap of moon-illuminated snow),
 Of him who to the Spanish camp, with tranquil air, moves calmly on,
 Not seeking to attract, nor shun, remark or note from any one;
 His long-digested tale of fraud, the renegade's and traitor's plea,
 Was well-matured, and confidence could but successful issue see.
 Anon his brow contracted grew, about his lip a mocking smile
 Denoted foretaste of delight in gloating o'er prospective guile;
 The deep-set eyeballs, 'neath the eaves of his dark eyebrows, wildly
 gleamed,

His hands were clenched, his teeth were set, he walked, but walked as
 one who dreamed;

All outward being was a blank, the while he inwardly rehearsed
 The bloody pageant of his thoughts in its deep tragic spell immersed.
 What were to him the glorious array of heavenly beaming lights,
 That in the cloudless concave shone, to conjure fancy's spaceless flights?
 Before their splendours hung the pall of murder's deep-ensanguined dye,
 And all beneath partook the tint of that repugnant canopy.
 Some time thus moodily he marched, then brusquely started from his
 trance,

Then quickly re-assumed his calm, to meet the sentinel's advance
 Whose challenge snapped the thread of thought, sharply as snaps the
 bow's tight string,

And from the dark ideal called to brunt the test of real thing,
 For sharp and harsh the challenge rang, "Who passes there?" a halbert
 glanced,

And from the sheltering ambush shade the pike-armed sentinel advanced.
 "Tell, Moorish hound, why wander you beyond your doomed city-wall?
 Are you impatient of the fate that is impending o'er ye all
 That thus you court the spy's swift doom? Give speedy answer to my
 quest."

And, as he spoke, his pike's keen head was levelled at the Moslem's
 breast.

Unshrinking from the threat'ning spear, and, with an ill-repressed dis-
 dain,

In calm, slow accents to the charge he this reply at length did deign:
 "Spaniard, not doom should be my lot, but large donation should re-
 pay

The pain and peril I have braved to steal from Malaga away

With secrets that thy king would give thy helm piled o'er with gold to know,
Will spare him waste of Spanish blood, and win you countless spoilage too.

Your great apostate, he who in the Gothic past, for vengeance sake,
Gave Spain to our forefathers' blades, as my example you may take.
The Moorish heart can feel a wrong, and foster wreak with any Giaour,
And wait and watch the coming on of well-built retribution's hour.
Why I foreswear my creed and race for precious vengeance, not for gold,
To Ferdinand and Isabel at fitting moment shall be told ;
Lead me to them, and thine shall be whatever sum my treason's price ;
If I betray for mighty hate, I do not sell for avarice."

SCENE II.

Within an ample Moorish bower, bedight with arabesque array,
And curtained wealth and carved device and varied stores of chaste display ;

Through the fair open lattice breathed the fragrant balm of orange bloom,
And shed a soft, luxurious charm throughout the faintly-lighted room ;
For the bland glow of moonbeams stole sweetly the lozenged casement through,

And where they lighted left a tint of silvery, soft'ning, chast'ning hue
On tapestry, and vase, and urn and bronzed casque and burnished blade,
And carved and gilded quaintness, which the sumptuous sala did pervade ;

But with that native light did vie the garish flames of lantern's gleam,
That from the sculptured roof did swing, fanned by the balmy ærial stream ;

And where the brightness did not glint the clear, sharp gleam of crystalite,

It shot the ruby's fiery spark, or softer amber's yellow bright.

And two fair forms of youth and grace full meet t'adorn a room so fair,
In all the luxury of love and loveliness were seated there ;

Braganza's young and stately heir, Don Alvaro du Portugal ;

And Beatrice De Bovadilla, ripe in beauty virginal.

The one a stately Caballero, formed in Apollonian mould,

With smooth, broad brow and manly face, and glance as tender as 'twas bold.

One hand his handsome head sustained, his fingers in the bright curls lost,

The other toy'd with whiter tips of fingers o'er the table crossed.

Abandoned to his loving strain, as seemingly absorbed she played

Amongst the ivory pieces there upon the chequered board arrayed ;

Her glance cast down in seeming doubt, but love through all the seeming shone,

Yet did she shun the ardent glance that now so fondly sought her own.

And fairer motive ne'er could be for sinless love's idolatry,

Which though the vot'ry's lips were mute, was blazoned by the traitor eye ;

For in the form and face so fresh, and rich in soft, voluptuous charm,
 Were centred all ineffable entrancements, blended to disarm—
 In their luxuriant harmony and radiant glow of perfect bloom—
 The poisoned point of envy's dart, so from detraction praise might come.
 But that which lent to form and hue in both, or either of the pair,
 Was the sweet halo of content and mutual bliss that robed them there
 With soft and hallowing tenderness that toned all human harshness down,
 And threw a bland and lovelier spell than aught but love could e'er have
 known.

There could be read delight and trust, frank to impart, free to believe,
 As eager to bestow a joy as it was willing to receive.

The beauteous flower, the summer morn, suns and expands to perfumed
 life,

Was like their fortune-favoured love, with an unshadowed promise rife.
 But, oh ! how oft performance halts behind the promise hope has given,
 And Eden's langours scent the sky ere by the tempest it is riven.

Oft life's most blissful moment is the herald of its deepest woe,
 As the swift tropic darkness comes succeeding sunset's brightest glow.
 So was it then, woe worth the hour ! for while joy's brimming chalice
 teemed

The soul-exalting nectar draught, the assassin's sudden poinard gleamed :
 The melody of love's soft phrase was severed by a shriek and groan,
 And on the blood-polluted floor that hapless pair lay ghastly prone ;
 For, sudden as the panther's spring, the murderer's bound and blow
 were made ;

And ere his presence full was known his victims' blood bedewed his
 blade.

He fell without an after cry, or e'en a quiver of his frame,
 And a blank corse supplied the place of ardent hope and valour's fame.
 Braganza's pride, so leal and brave, was trampled by the recreant heel
 Of the exultant wretch, who wreaked despite the dead no more could
 feel.

But, while his frantic rage was high, rough hands had seized him in
 their thrall ;

A dozen blades gleamed at his breast, and vengeful cries rung through
 the hall,

And hurried tumults fearful voice was echoed with confused sound,
 As courtiers, guards, and pages came thronging in consternation round.

And then a sudden stillness fell upon the wild, exciting scene ;
 Then through the throng the murmur rang, " Their Majesties, the King
 and Queen " !

And they, designed for sacrifice, scatheless within the circle stood,
 Transfixed with horror and surprise at the malignant deed of blood.

Fierce was the rage of Ferdinand, and Isabella's sorrow great,

To view the dire catastrophe resulting from mistaken hate ;

But greater consternation far the baffled murderer assailed,

That through his eager recklessness his deeper scheme of vengeance
 failed.

To threat, or question, or reproach, he deigned to make not one reply,
 But glared with spite on King and Queen, and on his captors scornfully ;
 One side-long glance he cast upon his victims, drew a long-drawn breath,
 Then, with an unperturbed mein, met his defeat, and waited death.

Not long he waited. But we'll pass his end, and close the tragic tale,
 No art or skill of surgery for Don Alvaro could avail.
 The Donna Beatrice survived ; but life for her was blank and vain ;
 The spring of pleasure was dried up—love's aloe never bloomed again.

JUSTINE AND REDGRAIN.

*A Northern Ballad, versified from an article ("Jack and the
 Beanstalk") published in "Once a Week," New Series,
 No. 9, Feb. 29, 1868. Edited by E. S. Dallas.*

THE wind blew eagerly from off the land,
 But all was taut and yare and trim aboard,
 As Gest Bardr's Shiff, with stout Norwegians manned,
 Put out for Thule* from the Northern feord ;
 But, with the rattle of the standing geer,
 And whistling of the breeze the cords among,
 A cadent flow of votive voices clear
 And deep did mingle as they sail'd along.

And Gest Bardr and his crew were gathered round
 A rev'rend man, of mild, religious air,
 Bare-headed, and in deep devotion bound,
 Chanting their recently-learnt Christian prayer.
 A creed new breaking on the Pagan Norse,
 Where Odin's sensual reign so long had been ;
 And these rude ocean-men had felt the force
 And fervour of their teacher's ardour keen.

As on they drove towards the outer holm
 The bowman noted a strange, gathering mist
 Thick'ning, and 'gainst the wind it seemed to come.
 Unnature-like it o'er the surface hissed,
 And briefly wrapped the Norsemen's shiff about
 In its dim mantle of unwelcome gloom ;
 While from her quarter a loud, hailing shout
 The mariners, with wonder, heard to come.

The prayer was hushed, and each, with wonder gaze,
 A look of question turned his fellow on
 At this strange hailing from the murky haze,
 That came on them like some phenomenon.
 The priest upon his breast made sign of rood,
 While o'er the bulwark Bardr, the master, peer'd
 To question who had called him from the flood,
 But saw nought for the fog through which they steer'd.

* Iceland.

Who hails me? Ho! What cheer! and who are ye?
 Strangely ye come! With good intent, I hope?
 I'd come on board to sail to old Thule,
 And that I may, cast me a graff or rope,
 And deftly thou shalt see me mount thy deck,
 And tell my hither come, and whither gang,
 To bide in this krank* corrach† nought I reck,
 And I have bode your coming overlang.

The rope was hove, made taut, and all stood by
 To lend a hand to lift the stranger in;
 But little needed he their courtesy,
 For smartly, over-handed, he did win
 The bulwark's top; and, with a nimble bound,
 Vaulted it o'er, and lighted brisk and free
 Upon the deck, casting a glance around
 As mocking and uncanny as could be.

And then the veiling fog as rapidly
 Uplifted as it suddenly came o'er;
 Yet seaward nor to land none could espy
 A sail or bark from skyline to the shore.
 Then thoughts of doubt and dread fell on the crew,
 While some their shiff-feres‡ whisp'ring drew aloof, §
 And eldern ocean-fears amidst them grew
 That this strange comer boded un behoof. ||

Grave was the master's brow, and pale his cheek,
 And brief the words of question or reply,
 As the grim passenger unlet did speak
 With frontful, unabashed loquacity,
 Mingling dire jests and Pagan oaths between,
 And sneers at new-blown faiths and creeds and rites,
 Lauding the ages that had known and seen
 The joys of Odin's sensual delights.

But when the rev'rend priest, Jostine, outspoke,
 And told of peace, goodwill, and heaven to come,
 Such fervent inspiration in him woke,
 The lewd, sardonic scoffer was struck dumb.
 Turning his back, he silent strode away,
 And paced the gangway with a moody ayr.
 As if within his restless bosom lay
 Some deep despite or vicious canker'd care.

There was a weird unhealiness¶ of mien
 About this man, who scarcely human seemed.
 His form was giant-like, his eye was keen,
 For but one eye had he, which fiercely gleamed

* Frail.

† Boat.

‡ Shipmates.

§ Apart.

|| Misfortune.

¶ Unholiness.

From out the sunken pit. His beetling brow
 Hung darkly over like a bosky crag,
 And round his wrinkled forehead, vilely low,
 A fell of elf-locks straggled grimly shag.

His cheeks were of a mat, pare, ashy hue,
 His nostrils broad, as used to scent of gore,
 His thick and sensual lips exposed to view
 A jagged row of fangs embristled o'er
 By stubbled tufts of an ill-growing beard,
 Save on the square jaws, whence two swirling tails
 Of undefined colour, harsh, and sear'd,
 Whisked out like pennants flapping to the gales.

Unfashion-like and strange his garments were,
 Emblazoned on his breast a spreading tree,
 While round his cruel brow, which else was bare,
 A golden serpent twined with emerald e'ee;
 And his blue mantle strangely was inwrought
 With fiery wheels, and disks, and golden eggs
 Linked to each shoulder by a sunclasp caught,
 Revealing his bare arms and brawny legs.

Alane* in moody wyset† the gangweg's‡ length
 Wrathenly§ paced he langwhiles|| to and fro,
 As stalks the stark bull in his ireful strength,
 Mutt'ring some heathen ban or scatheful¶ vow;
 While all aloof the healyman did pray,
 The steersman's noteful eye did scan the wave,
 The rueful schiffmen watched the dying day
 With boding spirits and expressions grave.

Night fell, and darkness o'er the ocean grew;
 The Priest and Stranger sought their separate hatch;
 The deck was left to the o'er-wakeful crew,
 For none seemed fa'n** to sleep, but all to watch.
 Yet was no ocean historie retold,
 No Saga fyt y'sung nor guyp essayed,
 For each seemed lothful by his voice t'unfold
 The misease which by speech would be betrayed.

But, as the night waxed old. the waves ran high,
 And through the tackle howled the gathering blast;
 The swarthy welkin echoed horribly,
 And replicated each concussion vast,
 As midwhiles the fleet leitet†† enlumed the murk,
 And loped like flickering shafts from wrack to wrack,
 Dazing the schiffmen in their seacraft work,
 As the wrung vessel staggered on her track.

* Alone. † Wise. ‡ Gangway. § Wrathfully. || Longwhile.
 ¶ Harmful. ** Inclined. †† Lightning.

'Twas when the horrent sturmwind wodeſt* blew,
 And the tossed seaboat wheltered in the wave,
 And the deep noon of night 'twas nigh unto,
 That "ill things hour," when sprites most freedom have.
 The oceanmen in drede† their craft did ply,
 With inward brood of the strange freight they bore,
 When a bright flo‡ o' leite shot through the sky ;
 Then all seemed darker than it seemed before.

But it had shown in middeck over nigh
 That evil form, and even then, did brenne§
 The dare|| of that fell-glinting, baleful eye
 That made them shudder 'neath its wicked kenn.
 And each schiff-ferē his fellow nigher drew,
 Standing agalpe to bide what next should fall,
 While chilly tremore crept o'er all the crew.
 So his ill presence seemed to cow them all.

And through the dernness to them came the sound
 Of mocking laughter and harsh gybing speech,
 Which held them in unwilling wantrust¶ bound,
 Boding their scathe from some unhealy reach.
 Slightly did he inveigh in wrath wise,
 Rating the convertites, and eke their creed,
 And lauding those lewd eldrich** mysteries
 Of Odin's with fierce threat and subtle rede.††

When over the fear'd crew, as he did ply
 His fell persuasion, sorry doubts arose
 In their unskilful minds, which ill could vie
 With one so deftly versed in sinful glose ;
 And half persuaded were they that right man,
 The healy Jostine, was their enemy,
 And feckless Redgrain they at length began
 To think a good persuading one to be.

"Trow ye," quoth he, "ye ill-judged, wavering churis,
 How your krank‡‡ follie hath provoked the ire
 Of those of eld ye feared ? Around ye hurls
 E'en now the Thunderer his wrathēn fyre.
 These swarthy clouds, that compass ye in gloom,
 Are the reflected frowns of Odin's brow ;
 And, raised by his high indignation, come
 These gyant billows hurtling 'gainst your prow.

"Kenn ye not that the wreakful, roaring blast,
 That rushes through the dim vault of the night,
 Is his unslekked§§ breath, in anger cast
 In sturm||| and din, to warn ye of his might ?

* Maddest. † Dread. ‡ Arrow. § Burn. || Stare. ¶ Distrust. ** Ancient.
 †† Warning. ‡‡ Weak. §§ Unslekked. ||| Storm.

Ye house within your keel Valhalla's hate,
 Ye bend before the foe of Odin's throne,
 Render the new faith's beadsman to his fate,
 Or dree the dole* will fleetly† be your own.

"Forethink‡ ye of your lapse from time-old faith,
 Of fineless wassale in the halls of death,
 Where from the foemen's skulls, who willed them scaith,
 The ghosts of Odin's leal reveleth.
 Be ye ashem't of this weak woman's creed—
 This jugglery of doiting, dryvling eld.§
 To grede and chant, and kneel in doleful dreed :
 This tricksome beadsman hath your manhood quelled."

More had he railed, but suddenly a low
 Of wonderous lyte the erewhile darkness broke ;
 Amidst the which the reverend priest did show,
 Standing before the dazzed oceanfolk,
 A healy fyre did seem to gyrd him round ;
 A healy wrath did brenne from out his eyne ;
 Wyles from his lips, in deep and solemn sound,
 He spoke : " Blasphemer ! Rue those words of thine.

"To thy vile, sensual, impious rule o'er-long
 The darkened souls of men have ye debased ;
 The worship that to higher Powers belong
 Your blood-stained pagany too long disgraced.
 But, lo ! this sacred rood I raise on high,
 The blessed symbol of a purer reign,
 Shall mark the tryumph of our Christantie,
 And break the fell links of your Hethen chain.

"Void thee, lewd scoffer ! Ill I know you brook
 The sight of this blessed, consecrated sign
 Of that on which the Loved One undertook
 His being for the world's sake to resign.
 Tempter ! Before my deep anathema
 Depart, and leave us of thy presence free.
 Nay, I will cope with thee in healy war,
 For weel I wot that Christus is for me."

And with the upraised rood advanced he,
 And smote at Redgrain bold and lustilie,
 Who not abode, but loped into the sea,
 And sunk like plummet from each wondering eye.
 Then Odin's worship waned, and Norsemen grew,
 Under the preaching of that saint-like man,
 Their eldern faith to spurn, and hail the new
 And goodlier lesson of Salvation's Plan."

* Dread the sorrow—misfortune.

† Speedily,

‡ Repent.

§ Age.

DRIFTING AND DREAMING.

LET me here slacken rowing,
 And tranquilly float,
 As the stream listeth onward
 On unimpelled boat.
 Side or stemward down-drifting,
 What reason to care?
 For entrancement and beauty
 Are everywhere.
 Shadowed here by soft greenage
 So luscious and cool,
 Whose duplicate forms lengthen
 In the calm pool.
 The shy kingfisher's region
 I mutely invade,
 And the haunts that the widgeon
 And wildduck have made.
 Where the startled birds flutter,
 Or keen fishes spring,
 Make the whirl and sharp splutter
 And circling ring.
 Break the softy, dreamy calmness
 As onward I glide
 Down the sluggish, meandering,
 Reed-margined tide.
 Let me welcome wild visions
 Of passion or fame,
 Reality's mockery
 Here hath no name.
 Here the moments are longer,
 More golden than hours,
 Fancy's essence is sweeter
 Than Fact's sweetest flowers.
 Here Fact hath no empire,
 But Phantasy's sway
 Draws it magical pictures
 That vanish or stay,
 As the wrapped entertainer
 May cherish or chide
 The vain or the credible
 Thoughts effigied.
 Brightest pageants, light circled,
 As on a fair scroll,
 Forms prophetic augurs,
 Hope-tinted unroll ;
 Of emprisal, wreath-crowned,
 As guerdon of worth,
 Time-honoured, immortalised,
 Given to earth.

Dream of beauty's rare image
 To virtue close knit,
 The ensample of duty,
 Calm judgment, bright wit ;
 And thyself its elected,
 Its destiny where,
 Mirror-like, is reflected
 The foul or the fair.

Dream the cloudlets o'erhanging
 The sun-lighted dome
 Are bright isles, where abiding
 The blessed make home.
 'Tis thy own bliss thou dreamest,
 For art thou not quite
 Blessed as those whom thou deemest
 The children of light?

Let the murk and the vapour,
 And fret of the world,
 Be shut out as the rosy-
 Robed vision's unfurled.
 Mirage rises on mirage,
 They vanish and come,
 Bright illusions of fragrance,
 Effulgence, and bloom.

Reality's incubus,
 O'er oftentimes present,
 Leave me the soft lunacy
 Gentle and pleasant,
 To dream on as I'm drifting.
 Ah ! would I could e'er,
 For the foolings of fancy
 Are better than care.

Let me rather—"Hullo there!"
 "By Jingo! What's hap?"
 I started up, still half-dreaming:
 A countryfied chap,
 With a horse-collar grin on,
 His bacon-face calls,
 "In two minutes more you'd
 Ha' bin o'er the Falls."

NIGHT THOUGHTS.

As belated, lone I'm sitting,
 Now the busy day is ended ;
 Seldom comes the tramping footfall
 Or the passing homeward wender ;

But the patter of the raindrops,
 And the moaning of the nightwind,
 Sweeping fitfully and mournful
 Round the chimney stacks and gables,
 Lend more comfort to the chamber ;
 For the sputter of the seacoal,
 And the clinking of the embers,
 With the ticking of the timepiece,
 And the hearthrug warm and downy,
 And the easy chair seductive,
 Make the contrast of the shelter
 Of the cosy, warm interior
 To the outside satisfying.

I have lain aside the volume
 That for hours has held me spellbound
 With its subtle, deep persuasion,
 Leading me through speculations
 Of deep themes of controversy,
 Till I marvel at the power
 Of the mind's deductive talent,
 Many-sided as a crystal,
 And each face a shining wonder
 Of diversely-tinted reason.
 And I ask, " Where is the ending
 Of the stubborn, earnest warfare
 Of opinion to be hoped for ?"
 Will the future ages bring us
 Some solution of the true course
 That the mind of man should travel ?
 Is the bone worth the contention ?
 Is the unrest wisely given ?
 Must conjecture still be bandied
 Through the infinite resources
 Of the wondrously deft players
 Who the shuttlecock inquiry,
 Keep aloft for ever bounding ?

The reply, though slowly given,
 Is a deeply-conscious verdict
 That the labour is not wasted ;
 That the faculty imparted
 Is a blessing to be cherished.
 Is the ever-spreading circle
 All within it help and daylight,
 All without it dim and sordid ?
 'Tis the nurture of the spirit
 Planted in us, like the fruit tree,
 Where the soil must be replenished
 By the fructifying compost ;
 And, with watchful, cleanly tending
 Of the roots and buds and branches.

All insidious defilement
 Fatal to its healthy being,
 Be subdued, that so the fruitage
 Dwindle not in mass nor flavour.
 'Tis the diligent dispersion
 Of the soiling dust and mill-dew
 That will settle to corrosion.
 'Tis the motion counteracting
 What might else become putrescent ;
 'Tis the exercise that braces
 To athletic mental vigour ;
 Girding with defensive armour
 Our so vulnerable natures
 From the vital shafts of error ;
 Or if one envenom'd rankles,
 'Tis, perhaps, to anodine it
 With some antidotal balsam ;
 'Tis to fit the mental pinions
 To the empyræan regions,
 Where the still expanding prospect
 Lends a juster estimation
 Of the varied map of beauty
 Spread out to the fair horizon,
 Than the earth-bound clod can dream of,
 Who, in misty, dim, contentment
 Toils and sleeps and feeds existence
 Out supinely or in anxious
 Worship of the ruling Mammon,
 But, relaxed by current twaddle,
 Ceaselessly rereplicated.

Let me rather tread the mazes
 Of opinion's labyrinth,
 Searching for the clue evasive,
 Leading to the certain issue.
 Down each avenue allurement,
 Even where research is baffled
 Of the special prize I covet ;
 Some undreamed-of newness guerdons
 The invigorating effort.
 Rarely left I off regretful,
 Seldom destitute of profit,
 But how frequently elated
 With a marvel and enchantment
 At the grand and varied phases,
 At the vast chromatic changes,
 At the tones of thought unending,
 That the subtle human fancy
 (That illimitable gamut)
 Can transpose in variations,
 Multiplied beyond conception ;
 Where occasionally discord

Lends the harmony enchantment ;
 Where the sombre-toned conception,
 Vivifies the brighter flashes ;
 Where the doubt is oft the offspring
 Of a hope of something better ;
 Where regret is borne along
 On rosy expectation's pinions ;
 Where I trace a certain nearing
 To more harmonious condition ;
 A wider, charitable leaning
 To different modes of one desiring ;
 A broader general recognition
 Of human claims long unacknowledged ;
 An aspiration of redemption,
 Of millions from unjust prescription,
 That caste and privilege injurious
 A penal heritage imposes ;
 A rising of the misty vapours,
 Of ignorance and dull convention,
 Intolerance, and superstition,
 Betraying men with wrath delusions
 To bitterness of one another ;
 Induction by a milder process
 Of clearer streams of filtered wisdom,
 To slake the thirsting of inquiry,
 With healthy, thoughted disquisition ;
 Reduction of the moral barren,
 Or tangled jungle wildly growing,
 A scandal and reproach around us
 To fruitful order and succession ;
 A capitation premium offered
 (As on the wolf's head in times olden),
 On strangled vice or baneful notions
 That raven on the populations.
 Ah Esperance, thou rosy goddess !
 Keep thy fair face for aye illumined
 With the sweet smile of inspiration
 Upon the earnest-hearted workers,
 Who for the coming time are anxious,
 And grateful for all present blessings,
 Both cleanse and plant, that generations
 Unborn may reap and glean the harvest.
 Labour, where self is not the tasker,
 Is a devotion to the certain,
 Undoubtful holiness of nature,
 That mounts mankind by rising stages
 To Virtue's high plateau delightful.
 There the perfection of our being
 Can breathe at ease and satisfaction ;
 'Tis there the grove of soft contentment
 Blooms, and embalmis perpetual odours ;
 The earth that nearest is to heaven ;

The state most kindred with the blessed,
 Approximating to angelic.
 Ye in the vale of gloom, mount upward ;
 Strength gathers with the earnest efforts.
 Be not affrighted at the distance ;
 It dwindles as the mist's surmounted ;
 It shows more lovely as you struggle ;
 And when at last you scaling triumph,
 You feel a victor's exultation,
 You pluck the wreath of self-approval—
 You are freemate to Conscious Duty.

CHESTERTON BELLS.

I NEVER near the merry chime
 Of steeple bells ring on the air
 But I recall the rosy time
 Of youth, with its illusions fair,
 And its fresh feelings of delight,
 On which tenacious memory dwells,
 Whose prized remembrances unite
 With Chesterton's sweet sounding bells.

Oh Cam ! thy narrow, tiny tide
 Was then a mighty stream to me ;
 And the gay skiffs that used to glide
 Upon thy breast were ships at sea.
 Thy banks of sedge and shingle stones
 Had greater charms than gold-strewn shore ;
 And Chesterton, thy sweet bells' tones,
 Than all else music thrilled me more.

In the soft summer evening calm,
 When sunset's glow was on the trees,
 Their melodies diffused a charm,
 As, faintly floating on the breeze,
 They came like choral strains awoke
 By spirits in the glowing skies ;
 And their sweet clamours seem to yoke
 The then to present reveries.

In childish dread again I stand
 Upon the river's silty marge,
 Drawn by a timely-rescuing hand
 From 'neath the downward drifting barge ;
 And as my stifled senses 'gan
 To greet the living world again,
 Thy carillon of gladness ran
 The changes of delight from pain.

They conjure back the truant hour,
 So full of idle, heedless joy,
 That years of after-cares lack power
 To sadden with their dull alloy.
 The bare-legged paddle in the stream,
 The boyish angle, child-rigged boat,
 The fairy forms of life's young dream,
 Like midges, all before me float.
 And Riverlane and Stourbridge plain,
 And Midsummer's and Ditton's dykes,
 With fond entrain I scour again,
 Oblivious of the world's dislikes ;
 And the soft symphony that rung
 The according joy will linger on,
 And memory cling, as then love clung
 To thy sweet bells, Old Chesterton.

TO MAY.

HAIL ! nymph of fresh and smiling mien,
 In daisy-spangled robe of green,
 Crowned with a varied flowery wreath,
 Thy lips emitting violet breath ;
 While in thy hand the blossom'd thorn
 Shakes out its essence to the morn.
 Thy dimpled feet, with lightsome tread,
 Scarce bend the sprouting floweret's head ;
 In thy mild eye the tempered ray
 Nor chills nor scorches the glad day ;
 And thy benignant smile, I wiss,
 Gives promise of prospective bliss.

Hark ! thy glad presence doth awake
 Melodious pæans in each brake ;
 And infant laughter, lightly borne,
 Comes from the snowy-blossom'd thorn ;
 And joy-bells' jingling musics seem
 To hail thee in each passing team ;
 And dancing hinds and maidens bright
 Deftly in measured capers light,
 Dance to the pipe and tabor's strain,
 And voice thy praise in glad refrain.
 Nature and man make holiday
 To welcome thee, sweet, jocund May.

Thou darling of the yearly train,
 Thine is the green and generous reign
 Of lush-soft, pliant, bounding youth ;
 No feigning mirth, but mirth in sooth ;

When all is fresh, and nought is coy,
 Thy temperate pleasure surest joy—
 Nor smile and tear, nor steadfast frown,
 Nor passion's scorch, nor sorrow's moan,
 Nor flaunting sear in gaudy tire,
 Nor frost-bound apathy—most dire—
 But healthy, innocent, and gay :
 I am thy votary, goddess May !

THE STREET AND THE ASYLUM.

A TRAMP, a tramp, a weary tramp,
 Through saddened streets, in cold and damp,
 A quest, a quest, a ghastly quest,
 At loss of health and needful rest ;
 A graceful form, in graceless gear,
 The bloom of life untimely sear,
 As though a mildew's blighting breath
 Nipped May-flowers with incipient death.

A sigh—a deep and laboured sigh,
 As unlapsed sisters pass her by,
 Such as the exile's soul exhales
 For his lost land and native vales ;
 To which, despairing a return,
 Nostalgian fires within him burn,
 Keeping his mind with longing strain
 On joys it ne'er can taste again.

A laugh—a feverish, reckless laugh,
 Than sigh or sob more sad by half ;
 For at its harsh, discordant ring
 Hope's angel droops the expanded wing,
 And veils its tearful eyes in woe
 For Earth's fair daughters, sunk so low
 That strongest faiths almost despair
 To trace the path to ransom there.

A moan—a faint, spasmodic moan,
 Some words in bated whisper tone ;
 A prayer—an ardent Christian prayer,
 In tender ruth and pious care ;
 A bright dilation of the eye,
 As piercing to eternity ;
 A thankful glance around her cast,
 And the short, stormy transit's past.

A REVIEW.

DAY is over, night is wasted,
 Morn's wee hour is drawing on ;
 Yet while day and evening lasted
 Can I approve what I have done ?

Have the moments been expended
 To my proper gain or loss ?
 Or one stage more of being ended,
 Marked by a sorry penance cross ?

The atoms lost of golden time,
 Through the unkept rents of life,
 Bring opulence of youth and prime
 'In age to penury and strife.

Fulllest urns that percolate,
 Drop by drop, their precious juice
 Will ultimately desiccate ;
 Waste's Profusion's worst abuse.

Be it time, or store, or power,
 They are ours for use and good :
 Restless is the mortal rower
 On the eternal downward flood.

Vast and dear the usance rate
 Of jewell'd instants Time has lent :
 His must be a sorry state
 Who fifty wastes of every cent.

Watch the time to delve and hoe,
 Choose the healthy seed to sow,
 Tend it till it ripe and grow,
 Garner 'gainst the frost and snow.

Let no stain thou canst erase
 From the sullied past endure ;
 Seek the mighty-helping grace
 To keep thy future just and pure.

Then, whene'er thou seekest thy rest,
 In nightly or eternal bed,
 Thy body's slumber shall be blest,
 Thy spirits, waking, hallowed.

QUERY.

WHAT are the odds, as fortune doles
 The winning or the losing lot,
 Whether they be the happier souls
 Who have their wish, or have it not ?

THE CURSE.

You see the broken scutcheon o'er the gate?
 The headless wyverns that on either side
 In grim burlesque of vain heraldic state
 Mark only where once ruled baronial pride;
 But now are trophies of a doom-struck line,
 On which the canker of corruption fed,
 That, through the constant stages of decline,
 Has sunk and left a memory of dread.

I, ruthless founder by the force of guile,
 And turbulent, red-handed mightiness,
 Built up the house to a half regal style
 By an ill subtlety and dark address.
 But dun traditions, floating down the tide
 Of time remote, in dim reports rehearse,
 That with his titles and demesnes of pride
 He to his heirs bequeathed a doom and curse.

He rose when England shuddered in the throes
 Of war intestine—in the rueful days;
 So rife in horror and in nameless woes,
 And episodes of sufferings and dismays—
 When things of beauty, like the roses twain,
 Ruddy and White symbolled the ruthless bands
 Who drenched Old England with war's bloody rain,
 And fertilised with brothers' gore her lands.

This fatal ancestor (the story goes)
 Stormed some strong manor of the Yorkist clan,
 Where such stout let preceded the red close
 Of the fell contest that no living man
 The Lancasterian victors left to tell
 The rueful tale; and still a direr fate
 The women of the vanquished ones befell—
 Delivered up to brutal, lustful hate.

While he, supreme in cruelty and crime,
 Whose word to save or doom had equal power,
 More coldly vile and impiously sublime
 In victory than fierce in battle's hour
 (Though that's the only virtue he could boast—
 If 'tis a virtue when it stands alone),
 Became the exemplar of his rampant host
 In all the basest leads that could be shown.

More than the lorn dependants of the place
 Of womenkind survived a daughter fair,
 And a bedridden granddame of the race,
 Long since dependent upon other's care.

Dimly her consciousness was waning out ;
 And, when the storm of war beset her bower,
 She lay unknowing of the bloody rout,
 Oblivious of the fate-impending hour.

'Twas there, beside her else deserted couch,
 In the wild impulse of bewildered dread,
 The maiden fled, in agony to crouch,
 And sanctuarise before the nearly dead :
 Thither her fell pursuer followed close,
 Her he had destined for his special prey,
 Enflamed, malignant, in his passion gross,
 From her young beauty's maidenly array.

There, as that scene of wild despair ensued,
 The prostrate dowager with vacant stare
 Vaguely gazed on, and wonderingly viewed,
 Striving to gather what the meanings were
 Of sights and sounds so strangely, wildly new,
 Till, quickened suddenly, her senses seemed
 The mortal haze to brusquely battle through,
 And, like a flash, the truth upon her beamed.

Yes, all the truth ! As leaps the livid flame
 From darkness to a fierce, diffused light
 On the surroundings that were dim and tame,
 Making distinct relief from general night,
 So all at one swift flash her mental gloom
 Was lumined by the truth-informing thought,
 And all the ghastly past and fate to come
 On her mind's mirror vividly were brought.

While the unequal contest of despair
 With brutal violence they desperate wage
 Her sunken eyeballs flashed unearthly glare,
 And every feature worked with helpless rage.
 Yet, still inert and nerveless as the dead,
 Her outspread hands lay on the quilted tire,
 A seeming corse, all but perception fled,
 A prey to inwardly consuming fire.

But when the victim, spent by horrors dread
 And futile struggle, in unconsciousness
 Sank helpless by her stricken granddame's bed,
 With one wild shriek of uttermost distress—
 As by a swift, revivifying thrill—
 A power mysterious seized that palsied frame,
 Or governed by a superhuman will,
 Or forces that one knows not how to name ;

But suddenly and ghastly she arose,
 Dreadful in mortal indignation's wrath,
 And sprang upon the floor to interpose
 And bar the brutal sacrilegious scathe.

In mute, but wild, appalling ecstasy
 Before the startled wretch she palely rose,
 With strange prophetic gleams in either eye,
 And features working in convulsive throes.

And there, 'tis said, in utterance dread and deep
 From lips long mute the malison went forth
 That wrecked his daily peace and nightly sleep,
 And made his power and wealth of nothing worth,
 And clung in some strange, unexpected way
 To all of his in scathe, or dole, or gloom,
 Till fortune waned, and prestige knew decay,
 And dark extinction marked their final doom.

INKERMANN.

THE night was passed in drear unrest
 Within the brave besiegers' camp,
 'Midst drizzling rain the heroes press'd
 The reeking earth, full cold and damp ;
 The misty pall hung on the height,
 While from the vale uncertain rose,
 At intervals throughout the night,
 The rumbling echoes from our foes.

By long and restless toil outworn,
 The lone piquetman's weary sense
 Might well be numb'd and overborne,
 And heavy grown from dull suspense ;
 The muffled legions still advance,
 Unheard had clambered up the steep,
 When through the mist the bayonet glance
 Of deadly columns grimly peep.

Like waves succeeding waves, the tide
 Of onward rolling ranks succeed,
 And mortal volleys, far and wide,
 Prelude a bloody strife indeed.
 Amazed, but firm, the gallant few
 The disproportioned contest hold ;
 To former honours adding new,
 Each foot of ground they dearly sold.

The camp, like lions roused from sleep,
 Starts into unsuppressive ire,
 And British steel and bullets sweep
 The foemen back in wild retire ;
 Reeling, their scattered front gives way
 In drunken flight and yelling spleen ;
 But onward still fresh hosts in grey
 Pour in the broken gaps between.

Bloodless his battle-roll,
 But on Time's honour-scroll,
 Boldly displayed ;
 He vanquished with fiery thought,
 By tenderest charms he fought,
 Deftly arrayed.

 So cunning his polity,
 That love, half idolatry,
 Subscribes to his law.
 All nature's dark twinings,
 All Fancy's combinings,
 He unravelled and saw.

 He taught, no priest better ;
 His word and his letter
 Seemed virtue and truth ;
 He aroused no false terrors,
 He glossed no venal errors,
 But preach'd honour and ruth.

 'Tis for this, the great dower he gave,
 A rich casket, with jewels brave,
 That our gratitude's stirred ;
 Though three hundred years have flown,
 That myriads in unison
 Hail the bless'd Twenty-Third.

THE SIEGE OF SAGUNTUM.

THE leagu'ring hosts of conquering Carthage ring
 The doomed Iberian city closely round :
 Without the walls, in ample revelling,
 The glutted troops in wasteful cheer abound,
 Wrung from a ravaged province by the band
 Whose fire and sword have swept and scorched up all.
 A swarm tremendous, having for command
 Hamilcar's son, the mighty Hannibal ;
 One of the lion cubs, his angry sire
 Vauntingly prated he had reared to chase
 The foeman who at sea escaped his ire
 To land, and hunt to death the Roman race.

 The environed town has giant efforts made
 In a prolonged and desperate defence ;
 Stealthy surprise, and open escalade,
 Have wasted it with carnage and suspense ;
 The meagre sentries show like mailed ghosts,
 For the spent stores and granaries are bare ;

Some drop from inanition at their posts,
 When other phantoms take their stations there ;
 No life but what is human span those walls.
 The loathsom'st carrion man in peace would shun,
 And garbage that the dainty sense appals,
 Gustfully now is seized and battened on ;
 Blockaded in with Famine and Despair,
 All hope cut off of rescue or supply,
 The aged, young, the rugged, and the fair,
 Have but the choice of death or slavery.
 That choice has long been made : one spirit reigns,
 The fixed, indomitable, judgment past,
 Rather than wear the Carthaginian chains
 To make their urban home one altar vast ;
 To the last verge of life the strife to bide,
 And the inevitable moment come,
 Their keen, expectant pillagers deride,
 With flaming ruins and one common tomb.

That mournful eve has come ; towards the east
 The Iberus flows, shimmering in the light
 Of Dian, rising in a cloudy yeast ;
 The dull camp-sounds drum in the ears of night,
 The twinkling camp-fires dot the tented plain,
 The accustomed wards upon the watch-towers stand,
 Though scarcely strength is left them to sustain
 Their weapon's weight, so famine has unmanned.

Within the walls what harrowing scenes ensue !
 What pen or pencil feebly indicate
 The pictures of devotion, stern and true,
 The resignation mute and desolate ?
 The gaunt and hollow-visaged groups that there,
 Tried by the imminent and mortal test,
 Depict the varied phases of despair,
 And of affection proofs the loveliest.
 Imagination may mock the shades
 To act again that horrent drama through ;
 And yet how mistily the fiction fades
 In tragic wonder to the action true.
 Children and women, men in stricken age,
 Compose the chiefest members gather'd,
 All youth, or manhood, that could battle wage,
 Are numbered at their posts, or with the dead.
 These feeble hands combusive matter pile
 In heaps, and trains conductive through each room,
 What now will burn is valued most, that vile
 That cannot aid the human hecatomb ;
 Each home is an incipient furnace made,
 The ready-lighted torches' flames arise,
 The work of devastation is but stayed,
 Until the pre-determined moment flies.

The future equally is bounded in
 To every of those doom-encircled souls,
 The loving hope of youth's imagining
 Cannot outlast extremest senile doles ;
 The ignorance of childhood wears a shade
 Of pain and wonder, in suspended mirth,
 And by a wilder tenderness dismayed,
 Shrinks screaming from the breast that gave it birth ;
 While others, with an elder semi-sense,
 Or vague conception of impending ill,
 Nestle and cling in silent confidence,
 Believing in that shelter safety still.
 The maiden, in her early woman's bloom,
 Withered and faded by fell famine's blight,
 Calmly resigned to what must be her doom,
 Esteeming it a boon to that which might ;
 Still in the lapse she tenderly doth pour
 On treasured love-gift of her young heart's choice,
 That valiant spirit that hath gone before,
 But whose brave memory her love doth voice
 In low-breathed murmurs of his cherished name,
 Who fell amongst the early patriot dead ;
 But still in death, as life, beloved the same,
 Or with a keener fondness nourish'd.
 Protracted anguish lacks the soft relief
 That tears could give her ; with a feeble moan,
 An upward glance, more hopeful than of grief,
 "Dearest," she whispers, "I shall join you soon,
 And with a spirit stainless as thine own,
 Share thy blessed lot amid the radiant skies ;
 Celestial bliss shall earthly grief atone,
 And sorrow change to endless ecstasies."

With wild and hungry eyes an aged pair
 Sit motionless, and mutely ruminate,
 With an unchangeable and glassy stare,
 As though the hopeless task to palliate
 The present weight of fell calamity
 Were tacitly renounced, for the sweet spring
 Of soothing consolation has run dry,
 And left them to their silent sorrowing.
 Their sons have, one by one, dying or dead,
 Been carried from the walls to that sad room ;
 The last lies ghastly on that blood-stained bed,
 Adding death's horrors to the chamber's gloom.
 The latest words those sad survivors spake
 Were in their blessing to that dying son,
 In those heart-melting tones of love that make
 The bliss and glory of the passing one.
 Mutely beside his bed of death they stood
 Gazing intently in his filming orbs
 As life ebb'd slowly like a sinking flood,

For mortal awe intenser grief absorbs.
 The death-rail ceased ; a grey and ashy hue
 Spread, like a mist wreath, o'er his features wan,
 And by a deeper silent chill they knew
 Their last and best-beloved son was gone.
 Actionless long they gazed, then o'er his face
 Tenderly drew the bed-tire's linen fold ;
 Then sat them down in the hearth's vacant space
 To watch him as they watched his sleep of old.
 Death found them there inert and motionless ;
 They sought him not, nor did they shun his tread ;
 He found them silent, wrapped, and notionless
 Of all, save that their last, sole hope was dead.

The noon of night has come ; the spent camp-fires
 Smouldering faintly light the sentry's watch,
 Who of his long-drawn nightly vigil tires,
 And ponders on the sack and loot to match,
 The mortified and baffled pride of war,
 The keen and greedy spirits wear and tear.
 He starts and listens ! Shrilly from afar
 A trumpet-blast rings through the silent air ;
 And promptly, as the dead at doom shall rise,
 The drowsy camp springs up in startled haste,
 Hurriedly question of the wild surprise
 That breaks upon them in the nightly waste.
 Again, and yet again, the clarion rings
 Its shrill, sustained, defiant echoes round,
 And with each blast a deeper wonder flings
 On the half-sleeping troops that list the sound.
 A mourning veil of gloom obscures the sky,
 And fitful tokens of an angry wind
 In hollow, plaintive tones swept sadly by,
 As flying from some fierce pursuit behind.
 O'er the encircled town, from whence has sped
 That startling challenge that so sudden broke
 The dreamy quietude of night, is spread
 A crown of dense and black ascending smoke,
 Whose volume, whirling in the darkened air
 Distends and spreads a choking odour round,
 Lighted anon by a fierce, lurid glare,
 Bursting in anger on the drear profound.
 And simultaneous with that flash upwent
 An irrepressive yell of common ire,
 Finding one voice, as those fierce flames found vent,
 "Saguntum burns ! Saguntum is on fire."
 Swiftly as shot that gleam of angry light
 Upward and round, so quickly pierced the thought
 Through each who gazed on that imposing sight
 That fall was triumph ! victory was nought !

Each strained eye-ball like a ruby shines,
 Corslets and bucklers, helms and spears gleam bright,

Tents, ambulances, flags, all in the lines,
 Are glowing in a blood-red glare of light ;
 And, like a baffled pack of hounds at fault,
 A purposeless, confus'd tumult rose ;
 Angry and orderless they run, they halt,
 They imprecate their loss, but praise their foes.
 But the fierce spectacle evolves its dread,
 Attractive, horrid charms of tragedy ;
 The grandeur that destructiveness can shed,
 The admirable of calamity.
 Gorgeous but awful, as those flames arise,
 The valiant spirits that could light them soar
 Triumphant and defiant to the skies,
 Thorough the crackling city's direful roar ;
 But not the transient brilliance of the flame
 Shall glimmer on the memory of the dead,
 But the undying lights of death-bought fame
 Shall gild it to all ages that succeed.

MY TASTE.

WHEN I can snatch a holiday
 I like to make a jolly day ;
 To make my Charlie don her gear,
 And put herself in feather ;
 To stow a little prog away—
 Some fragrant weed, a tube of clay ;
 And then into the country steer
 To take a walk together.

I like, too, when we've had our fill
 Of vale and woodland, stream and hill,
 To find some little snuggery
 That's private, clean, and homely,
 There to recruit exhausted nature,
 To munch, and sip a drop of "creature,"
 Which mauger all humbuggery,
 Is proper, pleasant, comely.

I like a sanded floor as well
 As curtained, carpeted hotel,
 When out on such a roving—
 In fact, I much prefer it.

With bacon-racks all overhead,
 A chimney nook, the table spread,
 Alone with her so loving,
 Is pleasant, I aver it.

To eggs and bacon I incline,
 And home-made bread not over-fine
 (Tastes vary in such matters,
 But I prefer it crusty).
 When exercise has given zest,
 The snack enlivened by many a jest,
 To contemplate the platters
 Is pastime "none so dusty."

I like to see the household dog
 Come slowly in to scent the prog,
 Then squat politely by my side,
 For little snacks so grateful,
 And seem to say, in dogs' dumb talk :
 "I hope you have enjoyed your walk ;
 I should be happy to divide
 With you that pretty plateful."

I like as well a country ramble,
 'Mid beech and elm and broom and bramble,
 As any who have sung their praise
 In style so much superior.
 Some painters picture wooded hills.
 Some coasts, some lanes, some shadowy rills,
 Some fiery sunsets, morning's haze ;
 I like a snug interior.

Plymouth, Autumn, 1854.

THE ENCHANTED LOVER.

*From the French of Fabre D'Eglantine—*Je T'Aime Tant* : Romance.*

I LOVE thee truly and so well
 That thee—how much—I cannot say,
 Though to each wind my love I tell
 With every breath that sighs away.
 Absent or present, near, away,
 "I love thee!" are the words I find ;
 With thee, or in the concourse gay,
 Thou'rt in my sight and in my mind.

To trace thee in a hundred fashions
 Is my pen's sole and loved employ ;
 To sing thee in all varied passions,
 To read thee in each volume's joy.
 Each beauteous one that meets my gaze
 I seek thy beauty in her glance ;
 Each limned perfection's varied phase
 Thy charms more perfectly enhance.

In cities, fields, at home, abroad,
 Thy gentle image is caressed ;
 Thou'rt in my slumbers'eve adored,
 In my last melting memory blessed.
 When I awake from visioned bliss,
 Before the daylight meets my eye,
 My heart so swift and eager is
 I see thy image standing by.

Apart, I am present at thy side,
 Divining all thy converse sweet ;
 My feelings to thine own allied,
 My soul with thy soul's cares replete :
 Return'd to thee, my spirits move
 Heavenward with a delirious ire ;
 I live but on the breath of love,
 And thine the breath that I aspire.

'Thy love is all my fortune, guide ;
 'To please thee all my envy's aim ;
 For thee, in thee, by thee beside,
 To live and breathe, have only name.
 My well-beloved ! my only treasure !
 Can love's sweet rapture higher soar ?
 Oh heaven ! I dote beyond all measure,
 And, if I could, would love thee more.

6, Hardinge Street, Islington, July 3rd, 1866.

THE DISENCHANTED LOVER.

From the French of Fabre D'Eglantine—L'Amant Désabusé : Romance.

LEAVE me ! leave me ! false and fair !
 Cease thy smiling, mocking part ;
 Thy gentle glance and timid air
 Too long have swayed my trusting heart :

No more love's weakness I confess ;
 Henceforth I'm from thy empire free ;
 In future vain thy false address—
 I separate myself from thee.

Thou'st lost for me that verbal grace
 Where love and reason seem'd blent ;
 All in thee, even to thy face,
 Is changed. Love the illusion lent !
 My soul idolatrous, in worship vain,
 Bent at a seeming goddess' shrine.
 Goddess ! be woman once again,
 And, woman ! own no thought of mine.

Cease to demand those lettered lies,
 Those vouchers of thy falsehood proved ;
 Pen me no sophist histories,
 Nor, penned, believe me by them moved ;
 Renounce the cruel, vain desire
 To wake the memory of the past :
 I blush at basking in false fire,
 And glory that I am free at last.

I then was timid, credent, weak,
 Before thee, but am so no more ;
 Plan, hope, dissimulate, and seek,
 Thy subterfuge hath lost its power ;
 Feign a severe or honied air,
 A gracious speech or fierce reply,
 You nothing feel, and even there
 I read the falsehood in your eye.

Or thy estrangement or advance
 To me are equal and as nought ;
 I'm heedless of thy word or glance,
 Nor on thee waste reproach nor thought.
 What are thy sorrows or thy fears,
 I am unmindful of their qualms ;
 Unmoved or by thy voice or tears,
 And, more, unconscious of thy charms.

Shun me, or seek another chain ;
 Be fond, or rest without desire ;
 For me thy love or hate remain
 Powerless t'invoke or joy, or ire ;
 For both thy crimes and virtues seem
 Of great and little import shorn :
 I take from thee all past esteem,
 And I refuse thee even scorn.

MORPHEUS AND THE INVALID.

Freely translated from the French of Fabre D'Eglantine.

A WRETCHED man lay in his bed,
Driving from eyes and thoughts reviving sleep,
While gracious dreams in eager concourse sweep
And flutter round his aching head.
About his pillow they in silence wind,
Slowly and patiently, their drowsy store ;
From cups of poppy flowers, of juices pour ;
But still the wretched man no sleep would find.

“ Ungrateful one !” Morpheus cried ;
“ Dost thou forget my favour and thy prayers ?
Saidst thou not, when betrayed by worldly snares,
Pretended friendship, or overwhelming greed,
‘ My vexed and humbled spirit stands in need
Of soothing comfort and a guide.
Come, God of Sleep ! come, close my eyelids down ;
Place on my aching head thy poppy crown ?
These were thy words, and I, in pity kind,
Have drugged in sleep thy agitated mind ;
Have soothed thee to a soft, refreshing rest,
And tranquillised the fever in thy breast ;
Yet thou to-night dost from thy lip
Ungraciously put by the proffered good,
And rather languishest in waking mood
Than of their peaceful chalice sip.
No more my troupe of rosy dreams
Shall weary their soft wings in lullabies
And futile efforts to weigh down his eyes,
Who of their care so thankless seems.
My calm endurance is used up ;
Of human suffering keep the vigil still ;
My train no more shall wait upon thy will,
Nor thou drink of my peaceful cup.”

“ Soft soother of the wretched throng !
Divinity of rest ! suspend thy wrath,
Nor angrily command thy angels forth
To punish me for thankless wrong.”
The rebel urged, in accents mild :
“ A goodly man this day has succoured me,
And gratitude for his blessed charity
Hath me of your soft care beguiled.

LILY OF ROUEN.

SIR GUEST, the storm which drove you here
 Is unabated yet ;
 And, by my sooth ! the ingle's cheer
 Seems by the contrast doubly dear,
 And you may more content you here
 Than in the bruit and wet.

Fill up again your horn of mead,
 And closer to the hearth
 Draw in your stool, and list my rede
 To bide the night with us ; indeed,
 Delay is oft the better speed,
 In time of nature's wrath.

Plain yeoman's welcome, and rude fare
 Of roof, and board, and bed,
 Alone I proffer you to share,
 And homely country chat, to wear
 The lagging hours, and lighten care,
 If they may be your stead.

The wold is wild, the ways are foul,
 The homesteads far between ;
 And on such night no Christian soul,
 When drenching rain, and fierce winds howl
 Prevail, should brook their fierce control
 In Christian land, I ween.

Look to your gear, good wife of mine,
 To bed the stranger well.
 Ha ! Ha ! I read that look of thine,
 Sir Guest, the wonder in thine eyne,
 Thou could'st not check, I can divine,
 And can the cause on't tell.

You wonder one so young and fair,
 So fresh and comely all,
 Who tended us with modest care,
 With less of wife's than daughter's air,
 With such an unmeet mate should pair,
 And how it could befall.

Well, while my spouse doth thrifty ply
 Her household heed for you,
 'Twill pass the time more fleetly by,
 For lack of better theme, if I
 Relate to you the history
 How this match strangely grew.

On pate and beard my sable hair
 Is grizzled with the white ;
 While she, in youth and beauty fair,
 Is fresh as rose in summer air,
 And with her beauty can compare
 Her temper's pure delight.

I am uncouth, and roughly wrought—
 She graceful as the fawn ;
 With every gentle impulse fraught,
 And soft in act and speech and thought,
 Of native sense and learning taught,
 And bright as summer morn.

Wonder you may such contrast wide
 Should ever come to mate ;
 But in this world strange haps betide,
 And Chance's whirligigs deride
 Our reckonings and our fates decide
 In most unlooked-for gate.

'Tis twenty years now gone since war
 Between this land and France ;
 Her yeomen called from near and far
 Veterans and striplings, rough but raw,
 And thew'd the clothyard bow to draw,
 And push the ashen lance.

With brave King Hal, our nation's pride,
 We o'er to France did fare ;
 The flouting Dauphin's sneers to chide,
 And swept with scathe the country wide,
 And took and sacked their towns beside,
 And played the devil there.

'Tis sore and rueful, looking back
 To scenes that then occurred,
 From ravening Desolation's track,
 Of famined fields and homesteads black ;
 Gaunt roofless crowds, erring in lack,
 By terror wildly spurred.

But, in the tug of war's fierce day,
 Small space for pity's thought ;
 Advantage must be pushed that may
 In victory's direction lay,
 And red eyed Carnage will not stay
 To be by Mercy taught.

Fell winter caught our host at fault,
 Before old Rouen's wall ;
 Too strongly fenced for quick assault,
 And 'neath the stormy laden vault
 Our leaguering army came to halt.
 For needs must Rouen fall.

To block all ways that led thereto,
 And every outlet close,
 By land or river them to mew,
 Deep dykes and palisadoes grew,
 And round old Rouen, Rouen new,
 A wooden town arose.

Needless, though just, it were to tell
 Of many fierce affrays ;
 And doughty sallies, foughten well,
 To break the martial girdle fell
 That bound them in, to wait the knell
 Of doom's avertless day.

Famine, our horrent, gaunt ally,
 With slow but certain clutch,
 Began to wring with scant supply,
 And dim the fire in Valour's eye,
 And council cruel policy,
 To eke the wasted hutch.*

None but the fighting force should stay
 Within the city's bound :
 Well, I recall the bitter day ;
 The snow, in deep-piled blank array,
 Shrouded the earth at morning grey,
 Outside the crowd was found.

Women and children, tottering eld,
 Crouching the walls beneath ;
 Dappled the dreary frost-bound field
 Like starving daws on winter wield,
 That no sustaining nurtures yield,
 But one vast wreath of death.

Driven out by friends from walls of stone,
 Foes like a wall of steel ;
 Folding them in, with succour none ;
 For pity's work could not be done
 Till stubborn Rouen had been won,
 Whate'er might pity feel.

Christe ! What sights we witnessed then
 Might I you give advice ;
 You'd deem, like me, of simple ken,
 We paid in woes of age-struck men,
 Women, and helpless children, when
 Rouen was won—too high a price.

Sad, night by night, and day by day,
 The frozen, famished crowd,
 From barricades were driven away,
 A gaunt and spectral array ;
 Some who in deep despair did pray,
 Some cursed in madness loud.

* Corn-chest.

Then came a thaw and drenching rain,
 Hundreds of corses strown ;
 Unburied on the sodden plain
 Some ghastly wretches yet remain,
 Warring with death in efforts vain
 By means best left unknown.

One night of storm to dismal post,
 My dreary midwatch fell ;
 At issue where the dykes were crossed,
 Remote, and in the champaign lost,
 At distance from our English host,
 A lonely sentinel.

Crouching the stout stockades among
 From driving rain and wind,
 My pike across my shoulder flung,
 My watchcloak to the wild-blast swung,
 Which howled the wooden pales along
 In gusts to daze and blind.

I know not why, though 'twas most drear,
 A sudden nameless dread,
 A chill of awe, if not of fear,
 A consciousness of something near
 Which I could neither see nor hear, !
 A sudden o'er me spread.

The darkness was so deep, in mood
 I tried to pierce the gloom ;
 Though I could feel my heart's deep thud,
 Beat quicker than a brave man's should,
 Who had seen sights of sack and blood
 Which in war's following come.

At last a wail, so weak and wee,
 Close to my leaning ear ;
 " Pour l'amour de la Sante Marie !
 Pour Christè et Sancté Trinitie
 Sauve ma chere enfante par Mercie,
 Il est une morantes prier !

My stranger ear, in sober faith,
 But ill the meaning caught ;
 But o'er and o'er, with faltering breath,
 The searching accents given to death,
 A power to comprehend bequeath,
 And sense of pity taught.

Then came a lull, the clouds unlace,
 A faint light spread around,
 And peering through the paling's space,
 A woman with death-stricken face,
 An infant clasped in her embrace,
 My startled vision bound.

Fainter those words of passion break

“ It is a dying prayer ;
For Christ and holy Mary’s sake,
Some pity on my infant take.”
I felt a ruth within me wake,
Of late but little there.

A voice (my mother’s), like a song,
A summons from the grave,
Seemed calling me, my heart grew strong,
I laboured at the stockade long ;
I felt God would not deem me wrong,
Though man perdition gave.

The bars went down by strength o’erpressed,
The child was in my arms ;
My hand the dying mother pressed ;
Me, by her glance, I knew she blessed
Ere she serenely sank to rest
In soft and holy calm.

The moon, in cold and humid stare,
Shed o’er her its faint ray ;
And on the visage fine and fair
A solemn and appealing air
Was fixed, like a commandment there,
Which I must needs obey.

I bent my knee in prayer wise ;
Just then the child awoke,
And gazed with bright and wondering eyes,
In innocent and sweet surprise,
On the bright glints that from the skies,
On casque and gorget broke ;

And tried to seize the light that peer’d
On the bright bosset’s tips,
Then patted on my shaggy beard,
And over either cheek it fared,
And finally my mouth it neared
And paddled with my lips.

I felt my eyes with tears o’erflow,
And something in me move,
A soft and gentle manly glow,
’Tis good at times to feel and know,
And mentally I made the vow
To shelter and to love.

Wrapped in my cloak the whole night through,
I lulled her at my breast ;
Among some rough war-comrades though
Much banter I’d to undergo ;
But they soon learned, being human too,
To love her like the rest.

Each one was guard and nurse by turn,
 A stealthy, riskful care ;
 But mine the parent's part to learn,
 And every infant want discern,
 The claim and title both to earn,
 And with none other share.

Winter wore out ; spring, summer, came ;
 A fleeting peace was made ;
 The world was big with Harry's name ;
 To be a simple soldier fame ;
 A war-wound had a special claim,
 Which loyal England paid.

For back we came—myself, you see,
 No more for fighting meet
 By reason of this shattered knee
 That left me no more marching free,
 But bound to toil on wold and lea
 In the old trodden beat.

And to the work with will I went,
 And labour with me throve ;
 My charge seemed as a blessing sent
 To sweeten toil, and bring content ;
 Love yielded more than duty lent,
 And fortune grew with love.

But my fair Lily, thus I named
 My treasure, my delight,
 For drift of skill and lore craft famed,
 For freakish maiden whims ne'er blamed
 To woman's beauty grown, now claimed
 Other reflections quite.

With a sore chill I felt the smart ;
 The certain time drew nigh
 When love must speak in maiden's heart,
 And some new bond must come athwart
 To share my sunshine—perhaps to part
 Our erewhile happy tie.

No flush on cheek, nor eyelight's glow,
 No fluster in her mien,
 That love unconsciously must show,
 And lure e'en half-souled louts to woe,
 But doubly heartbold love, I trow,
 Was ever to be seen.

I was sore puzzled ; but ere long
 A sprightly, stalwart wight,
 Of handsome face and ready tongue,
 And well to have our swains among,
 Lithesome in dance and sweet in song,
 Would oft drop in at night.

His drift, while yet untold, was plain
 To the most common sense ;
 Yet, though he o'er and o'er again,
 Through weather fair or drenching rain,
 Would come, she little would remain ;
 But, under some pretence,

Would steal her maiden bower unto,
 And leave a sorry gloom ;
 For I grew thoughtful, and he rue,
 And talked—of what we hardly knew,
 And many anxious glances threw
 To whither she should come.

E'en o'er ourselves a change befell—
 A strange, a nameless, change.
 If me she feared I could not tell,
 Or her I trusted not so well :
 It seemed as though some sullen spell
 Had fallen on our grange.

One day, the sun was shining clear,
 The birds were singing sweet,
 As to the grange my steps drew near,
 In any mood but pleasant cheer,
 Who should I, by the mill-dam weir
 But Lily's lover meet ?

His face was flushed, his look was sad,
 To speak he often tried ;
 In sooth, I pitied the poor lad.
 At length he told me that he had
 His loving suit to Lily made,
 And been by her denied.

"Denied !" I faltered (yet confess
 I much delight did smother).

"The ends of woman's waywardness :
 Hopeless to know, or e'er redress.

But what's her motive ? Can you guess ?"

"She own'd she loves another."

I felt a dizzy feeling run
 All chilly through my frame,
 And seemed to dim the noontide sun ;
 And, when to feeling I begun
 To grow again, the youth was gone,
 And dazed I wandered hame.

All long the way full times a score
 The words I did repeat—

"She owned she loved another more !"
 I stammered o'er and o'er and o'er,
 As though confounded, seeking power
 The meaning on't to weat.

She from me then her secret kept,
 How long I could not tell ;
 I am not sure, I think I wept
 (I know not why I should except
 That had awoke which long had slept,
 And now I knew too well).

I found her looking sad and pale ;
 I told her what I knew ;
 I bade her tell her passion's tale
 If gear or dower might aught avail,
 That my consent should never fail :
 "Whom should I love but you?"

And in my arms, with loving press,
 I clasped her to my heart
 With many a soft and fond caress ;
 And may kind Heaven for ever bless
 Her who hath been my happiness
 Since the priest did his part.

Fill up, Sir Guest, and to her health
 We'll drain another horn.
 A love that knows deceit nor stealth,
 That is not bought by gear nor pelf,
 Is a true man's unfailing wealth,
 Of which he can't be shorn.

DRINKING SONG.

(Set to Music.)

OH ! devil a bit care I
 How soft the cheek,
 How red the lip,
 Or from out her fringed eye
 How many rosy Cupids speak
 While I this nectar sip.
 Love's a weak, insipid toy ;
 Bousing is a lusty joy.
 Then let the lover sigh
 In maudling state
 And gloomy soul.
 So befool myself ? Not I !
 Nor on capricious woman wait,
 But wrestle with the bowl.
 Love and Grief, I mock your pain ;
 Life is joy while this I drain.

A SONG.

HOPE for a better time than this,
 And with thy earnest efforts strive,
 Where'er a germ of goodness is,
 To keep the struggling grain alive.
 A single weed, if rooted out,
 Gives space to bloom an od'rous flower.
 Scatter the seeds of hope about ;
 It is a healthy, helpful power.
 Hope for a better hour ; time brings
 Cause to believe in doubtful things.
 Not hope alone, but learn and teach,
 Though in a humble, narrow sphere.
 Duties there are for all and each,
 For good and ill are everywhere.
 And though your hidden efforts may
 Small promise of requital give,
 Yet there will come a reck'ning day,
 For acts of virtue ever live.
 Hope in a better time to shear,
 And bind the crop you help'd to rear.
 Hope for a better time, ye brave
 Regenerators of mankind ;
 Hope, thou poor, toil-worn, scourge-seamed slave,
 And thou benighted, drudging hind ;
 Thou ragged urchin, cast amain
 Upon the fetid sea of crime ;
 Ye frail, ye weak, ye patient train
 Of wronged ones, hope a better time :
 Though slow its coming may appear,
 'Tis coming ; may it soon be here !

A SONG.

OH ! calmly think when thou wouldst weigh
 Thy fellow man in Judgment's scale,
 Lest inconsiderate accents may
 Give wounds which Justice must bewail.
 How many an act and sentence rose,
 Though ill performed and ill expressed,
 From motives full as pure as those
 That actuate the Judge's breast.
 Condemn not with unkindly thought,
 Lest thou to judgment shouldst be brought.

Who should in arbitrary mood
 Arraign, and without proof to know
 If the intent were bad or good,
 Raise to contempt, or sink to woe.
 Suspicions sown are evil seeds,
 That strongest grow in noxious soil ;
 And such prolific, baleful weeds
 Choke many a crop of virtuous toil.
 Condemn not with unkindly thought,
 Lest thou to judgment shouldst be brought.
 Where all have taint of greed or pride ;
 Where none are perfect—no, not one ;
 Where each in homes of glass reside,
 Who should be first to cast the stone ?
 Let each be tutor to the rest,
 To teach what share of good we know.
 Truth should, like Charity, be dress'd :
 The frail respect to frailty owe.
 Condemn not with unkindly thought,
 Lest thou to judgment shouldst be brought.

GOOD AND EVIL.

How infinite in value is a bliss
 That hath been bought at the unabated price
 Honour and Duty, those just valuers,
 Vouch as its current worth. Perpetual
 To us the acquisition so attained :
 Seedling it may be, branching many joys ;
 But, withering, cannot know. Inherent life
 Centres within it. Cosmopolitan
 In natural vigour, it will bloom alike
 'Neath blazing, temperate, or freezing fates,
 And, in the dearth and famine of the soul,
 Will, like a desert spring, exale and cheer,
 Or, like a manna-cloud, expand and shower
 Its slowly-ripened but unfailing fruit.
 Vices and errors, when engendered, oft
 Are hid and buried, like sin-gotten things,
 In dark and sullen nooks, and for a while
 The parentage is lost ; but tintless spawns
 Of loathed reptiles will expand, and gain
 The venom'd natures and repulsive forms
 Of their originals ; or, cramped may be
 By some more horrid mould, take its fell cast,

But, in its growth requiring greater space,
 Bursts its false continent, and issues forth
 A double monster, with an aspect cursed.
 So long concealed offences, when mature,
 Start up from silent secrecy, and stand
 Before their authors, claiming to be owned.

GUILT IN THE STORM.

AN EXTRACT FROM AN UNFINISHED MASK.

Scene : On the Mountains During a Storm. GRENWALD Solus.

AH ! night of storm, tumultuously vexed,
 Consonant state of destiny perplexed,
 Like mine, where the fierce passion storm hath grown,
 And still in unspent fury holds its own.
 Your seething lightnings and your thunder's din
 Faintly reflect and mock the strife within
 This throe-wrung bosom, where exhausted ne'er
 The accumulated force of wild despair ;
 And unblessed cravings, never to be stilled,
 Prolong the racking strife with which 'tis filled.
 Thy strength of fury speediest leadst to peace ;
 Thy loudest peal, thy fiercest flash, will cease ;
 And o'er these inky summits and dim vales
 The moon-lit scud shall spread its fleecy sails.
 Thy dizzying concave, wrapped in gloom and gleam,
 Alternately will shimmer in the beam
 Of the pale, tranquil moon, and countless rills
 Shall sparkle mid thy crags an l pine-clad hills.
 But no renewal of quiescent hours
 Is mine to hope for, for the hell-born powers
 Constant, irreconcilably, array
 Their legions in my soul at endless prey :
 A love that's hopeless, nameless, not the worst ;
 The deepest hate, being impious and accursed ;
 Remorse that scorches, but unbending will,
 Prompting to deeds far deeper, darker still.
 Shuddering to view their past results, I burn
 A heavier future weight of woe to earn.
 The insupportable I would augment,
 And, fearing no new crime, fear to repent.
 Crime's weight its impulse doth accelerate,
 And hurries madly on to darkling Fate ;

But its wild progress fires the giddy brain
 With longing for still speedier entrain.
 Nor sees, as reckless down the pent 'tis whirled,
 Th' abyss o'er which it surely will be hurled ;
 Or views without a feeling of dismay
 Annihilation's rocks confront the way.
 Inebriate pleasure mounts, and keener glows
 As, nearing the inevitable close
 Of the fleet, fatal course, exultant rise
 Phrenetic laughter and defiant cries ;
 As huntsman at the unknown gap doth ride,
 Nor dreads destruction on the other side.
 What ! doth your anger slacken ? Let it grow !
 Recharge your rampart clouds with darker show
 Of pregnant desolation, pile on pile ;
 And while your lightnings blast, laugh ! laugh the while
 The volumed peal that shocks the mountain side,
 And frees the avalanche's fatal glide ;
 Till the unpeopled realms of ice and snow
 May overwhelm the populated vales below
 In one unwarned and momentary doom,
 Hopeless as when dark Chaos' hour shall come ;
 Where, eyried castle and low sheltering cot,
 Kaiser and clown might share one common lot,
 And every grade between the two extremes
 Lie scathed and blasted by your lightning's gleams.
 Nor I survive but for one single thought—
 I am the *last* ! And now that *last* is nought.

VIRTUE'S REVERIE.

AN EXTRACT FROM AN UNFINISHED MASK.

Scene: Moonlit Wood. LUDWIG Solus.

O welcome hour of peace. The festival
 Of cogitating thought and inward count ;
 When we disrobe us from day's heavy thrall,
 And cleanse our minds at calm reflection's fount.
 How blessed and welcome thy tranquillity
 In the dim umbrage of the peaceful grove,
 With soft and gentle affability
 To welcome guests day's garish hours reprove.

Sweet thoughts, more cherished from their secret birth,
 Being unjustly barred, more fondly prized ;
 Which test the poverty of thoughtless mirth
 And make the charms of being realised ;
 For is not love, in life's fair garland twined,
 The fairest, brightest, most enduring flower ?
 All earthly aims, all human lures combined,
 Pursued and won yield not so blest a dower.

Let power exult in undivided sway ;
 Let wealth engender avarice' eager quest ;
 Let glory's fiery star lure to betray ;
 Or let ambition's devious suit be pressed.
 Learning, or art, or sensual passion's chase,
 Unlinked with love, are barren and must pall ;
 Love is life's essence, its chief charm and grace,
 Its spring, its root, the very crown of all.

And must a father's choice of need be mine ?
 Or can a mother's eye my guidance be ?
 Or can my fancy, like the suckling, twine
 And clasp at bidding what repugneth me ?
 Breathe I by proxy of the vital stream ?
 Can love be, like the moon's reflected ray,
 A second-handed, simulated gleam
 Of the reality of glorious day ?

My heart hath soared, and shall I pluck it down,
 And hood it with dull policy of earth ;
 Stifle its morning song to daylong moan,
 And of life's opulence make beings dearth ;
 Bind it with golden bars, and make it mate
 To one of uncongenial, stranger note ;
 Tasked with some lying lay to mock its state,
 Or die unuttered in the trembler's throat ?

No ! rather where the wintry snow-wreath lies,
 Or Spring's young flowerets in God's acres bloom ;
 Taintless of love-slight, or vile perjuries,
 Let faith's pure tear bedew my nameless tomb ;
 Or, under some low thatch, one gentle voice
 Echo the sweet content my own should know ;
 My heart should triumph in its loyal choice,
 And fortune's fiats firmly undergo.

I will not slight where I have wooed to win ;
 I will not plight with falsehood on the tongue ;
 I will not against saint-like conscience sin,
 Nor act the treason of the world so young ;
 I will not study in deception's school,
 Nor court regret in semblance of a gain ;
 Worldlings may dub me honour's doating fool,
 But honour's faithful son I will remain.

CALL TO THE FAIRIES.

FROM MS. MASK.

YE subtle essenced, airy things,
 Translucent forms, with filmy wings ;
 Who 'neath the heaven-hung galaxies
 Circle in elfish revelries !
 Flit athwart pale Dian's beams,
 Glinting thin reflected gleams
 Through the umbrageous bourgeons glance,
 And hum elf music as ye dance.
 Roguish fays and wanton sprites
 Burn with party-coloured lights ;
 Make the sylvan alleys glow
 And glisten with your to and fro,
 Hither, thither, mazy flight,
 Resplendent in soft, mystic light,
 Swing upon finely-balanced sprays
 And chirrup cheering roundelays.
 Hark ! the sheep bell's tinkling chime
 Beats a dreamy, measured time ;
 And the bay hound's plaintive whine
 Marks night as altogether thine.
 Then group in verdant fairy rings
 And prance ye careless, antic things ;
 Crowd every instant of the night
 With wild, ineffable delight.
 Bathe your wings of prism'd hues
 In crystalline nocturnal dews ;
 Chase the bubbled forms that ride
 Upon the rumbling brooklet's tide ;
 Mount your bat and beetle steeds,
 And tilt with spears of tiny weeds :
 Through trumpet bluebells sound the blast
 Of revel till the night be passed.

MILLER'S SONG.

AN EXTRACT FROM AN UNFINISHED MASK.

THE click clack of my mill
 Hath rung all day so shrill
 Click clack ! Click clack !

But my wife's untiring tongue
 Can rattle loud and long
 Click clack ! Click clack !
 But use is second nature,
 So let the dear old creature
 Click clack ! Click clack !
 By day my click clack mill,
 At night she gives me still
 Click clack ! Click clack !

CHORUS (*aside*).

Ha ! ha ! ha ! Ha ! ha ! ha !
 The miller thinks aloud.
 Ha ! ha ! ha ! Ha ! ha ! ha !

MILLER.

Zounds ! what a goodly crowd !

MILLER (*solo*).

What feast, or wake, or statute fair
 What revel rout or frolic rare ?
 What merry devil-sports on hand ?
 What manormop or fleury planned ?
 Is it some saintly holy e'en,
 Or hop and skip and bus between,
 Or 'Dis a Dis o' green, green grass ?
 What jolly jinks to come to pass ?
 What's toward ? Answer neighbours.

OLD WOODMAN.

There's neither feast, nor wake, nor fare,
 Nor revelrout nor frolic rare,
 Nor merry devilsport on hand,
 Nor manormop nor fleury planned ;
 It is no saintly holy e'en,
 Nor hop and skip and bus between,
 Nor Dis a Dis o' green, green grass,
 Nor jolly jink to come to pass—
 We've neither pipes nor tabors.

YOUNG WOODMAN—*Solo*.

We have made the forest echo's ring
 All day with rattle, thud, and ding,
 With quip and laugh and jest between
 To lighten labour and kill spleen.
 But now the shades of even fall,
 And wrap us in their sombre pall.

As well becomes each honest mind,
 We cast the worldly weight behind,
 And rest us from our labours.

CHORUS.

In byre and fold,
 In forest and wold,
 In barn and harvest field.

Cheerful and gay,
 We've toiled all day,
 Storing Nature's yield.

Each taking share
 In the duty and care
 That to mortal lot must fall.

We lighten the load,
 We make cheerful the road,
 That leads to the ending of all.

GLEANERS' CHORUS.

Home, sisters, home !
 Home, sisters, home !
 We've leazed the stubble lands,
 We've sheaved the golden corn.

ALL.

We've toiled with willing hands
 From early misty morn ;
 But weary nature needs repose
 When the day's cloudy curtains close.
 Home, neighbours, home ;
 Our time of rest is come.

[*Vesper Bell.*

ALL.

Hark ! through the solemn air
 The vesper calls to prayer.
 Home, neighbours, home ;
 Our time of rest is come.

[*Exeunt.*

THE STORY OF A STRIKE.

Freely translated and adapted from the French of M. GABRIEL PREVOST.

MY JUDGES ! My sad story shall be brief.
 Patiently hear, and judge my crime and grief.
 We blacksmiths were on strike, as was our right ;
 The pay had fallen, and the winter's bite
 Had pinched the faubourg with its hungry might.
 'Twas the week's end ; our night of scanty pay
 We had grown to call "The bitter Saturday."
 One took me by the arm, and led the way
 To our companions at the cabaret.
 Their names I once again refuse to give.
 "Old Father Jean," said they, "we cannot live.
 More pay, or no more work : our only plan
 Is to resist ; we've sworn it to a man.
 You being the elder and best-trusted hand,
 Go, let the master know how matters stand.
 He'll hear you patiently. More pay we will !
 Or from this time our hammers shall rest still.
 Say, are you willing ?"

Why, what could I say ?

But I was theirs, to serve them any way.

My Judges ! I've not served at barricades ;
 I'm old and peaceable ; and false parades
 Of black-coats, who lead ours to strife and blood,
 I ne'er have trusted and ne'er understood,
 Could I refuse the task they honoured me
 To pick me out for ? No, that could not be ;
 I took the onus and the compliment,
 And to the master with the message went.

He was at table, having newly dined ;
 They showed me in, and I unloosed my mind.
 I told our grievance ; how the times were hard ;
 Dear food and lodgment called for some regard.
 I drew a balance of his gain and thrift
 Against our toil and misery and shift ;
 And urged, politely, that he fairly might
 Make the concession, with no loss of right.

He listened calmly to this plea of mine—
 Now cracking filberts, and now sipping wine—
 Until my tale had run out to its span ;
 Then blandly said :

“Jean, thou’rt an honest man !
 Those who have sent you know right well to choose
 A spokesman. Your good nature they abuse.
 Your place is yours, at all times, in my forge ;
 But *their conditions* stick fast in my gorge.
 These turbulents are ever lazy too.
 I *shut them out*, the discontented crew !
 There’s my last word. Go ! tell them what I say.”
 I answered :

“Sir, I will.”

And went my way
 With heavy heart, for sorry news I bore,
 Which made our prospects darker than before.

There was great tumult, wild talk, and all swore
 Never the factory to enter more ;
 And I—being no black sheep—I swore as well
 To stand or fall with them, whate’er befell.

Ah ! more than one that night, in dull dismay,
 When, home, they on the table laid the pay,
 I’ll answer for it, had a heavy mind ;
 Nor through the long night, sleep, from thought, could find ;
 Thought of long days, or weeks, perhaps of worse,
 Of idleness, half fasts, and empty purse.
 For me the blow was hard, being old, and three,
 Beside myself, depending upon me.

Entering, my little grandsons sought my side,
 And climbed my knees for their accustomed ride.
 Their father had *gone wrong*, their mother dead ;
 So ’twas for me to find them love and bread.
 Sadly I kissed the lips I thought might soon
 Clamour for food when I to give had none ;
 And the shamed flush o’erspread my cheek and brow
 For my rash yielding to a rasher vow.
 True, that mine was not worse than others’ case ;
 And to our fellows we owe faith and place ;
 And duty’s more than hollow sound to men.
I had done my duty, and I would !

Just then
 The old wife, weary, from the washhouse nigh,
 ’Neath heavy packets bending languidly,
 Came in ; and, oh ! ’twas a hard task to break
 The news I knew for her would sorrow make.
 How that poor soul did struggle with her sighs,
 Fixing upon the floor her humid eyes,
 And long remained immovable.

At last,
 “My Jean,” she said, “for many long years past
 You’ve known me for a thrifty, prudent mate.
 I’ll do my best ; but times are hard of late,

And all our means and management, all ways,
 Won't give us bread for more than fifteen days."
 I made reply :

"The affair may be arranged."
 Though I knew well that nothing could be changed,
 Except by treason to our covenant,
 And that the strike would last through every want,
 And watchfulness to traitors small grace grant.

Then at the first we managed as we could :
 Half rations of dry bread our only food.
 Next, all was pledged ; I fretted with pent rage ;
 We of the workshop find the home a cage
 In labour hours ; I've known a prison cell
 Since then, and which is worse I cannot tell.
 'T have nought to do, who have been used to work ;
 To sit with folded arms perforce doth irk.
 You may believe it not, but we then find
 How much the workshop's to the workman's mind :
 That atmosphere of filings, smoke, and fire
 Becomes, by use, a natural desire.

At the end of fifteen days our all was spent.
 How often, like a madman, forth I went,
 Alone, straight onward, through the passing throng,
 Among whose lulling hum I dreamed along ;
 For, better than strong drink, it made forget
 The hunger-pain, which then knew little let.
 And want did come, a biting, cruel want,
 Remorseless, sickly, pitiless, and gaunt.
 But Oh, my Judges ! give me your belief,
 At its dire worst, I could not be a thief.
 At the bare thought, from shame, I should have died
 But by despair to be so strongly tried !
 To stare my hopeless prospect in the face,
 And keep temptation out—no easy case—
 But in the season of hard frost and snow,
 When my old honesty beheld the show
 Of my old faithful mate, and grandsons pale,
 Shivering at hearth, where food and fire both fail ;
 Before her silent tears their infant cries—
 A sight and sound to torture heart and eyes—
 Never, by this blessed crucifix I swear,
 Flashed in my mind—all sombre with despair—
 That action, vile and furtive, of the street,
 The trembling heart, the stealthy following feet,
 The wandering, watchful eye, in eager quest
 Of what the clutching hand might grasp the best.
 Alas, alas ! if now my pride breaks down,
 If now I bend and weep before your frown,

'Tis that I seem to see *them* once again
 In all their hopeless misery and pain ;
 Those dear ones, for whose sakes, for theirs alone,
 I have been led to do—that which is done.

One cold, grey, grim, December afternoon—
 I know not why I had returned so soon—
 My poor old wife I in a corner spied,
 And the two youngsters huddled to her side
 For warmth. And as I gazed I said, in thought :
 “ Assassin ! Look upon the work you’ve wrought ! ”

No word reproachful had she ever used ;
 But now, with voice still gentle, but confused,
 “ My poor old man,” she faltered, “ what’s to be
 The help for these poor mites, yourself, and me ?
 Our last poor mattress is too old to pawn.
 What shall we do for food to-morrow morn ? ”

I started up !

As one would seize a foe,
 I grappled my despair. I cried : “ I’ll go.
 At any hazard I’ll to work again,
 Although I doubt the others will refrain,
 And think me false to them, and to the cause ;
 But hunger mocks rash vows and hasty laws ;
 But first I’ll seek the leaders, where they stay
 Holding committee at the cabaret.

I hurried thence ; I entered. Did it seem
 That I was in some false and mocking dream !
 They, with wild mirth, were drinking, laughing there,
 While we, at home, were pining in despair !
 Yes, laughing, drinking ! We thus paid the sum
 But to prolong our horrid martyrdom !
 But they shall hear an old man speak his mind !

I staggered in—with rage and tears well blind.
 When they beheld me, with the angry glow
 In flaming eyeballs, and wrath-wrinkled brow,
 They guessed my purpose, and assumed to bear
 A manner feigned, both sombre and severe.
 But I spoke out :

“ My fellow workmen, hear !
 I and my wife have passed our sixtieth year :
 Two little grandsons on my arm depend,
 And in the garret, where our lives we spend,
 Our movables are sold, we without bread.
 What may become of me is quickly said—
 Death in the hospital, a pauper’s grave,
 Is an end fit for such a wretch to have ;

But to my wife and little ones—not so.
 Then briefly—back I'd to the factory go.
 But first, it seems, your leave I must obtain
 To keep my good name from dishonour's stain.
 Look ! If my hands are black, my locks are white ;
 For forty years the craft has known me, *right*.
 Let me return *their* livelihood to get.
 I cannot beg, but I can labour yet !
 If not my pride, let age be my excuse ;
 'Tis hard in age to struggle 'gainst old use.
 One makes to passers-by a sorry show
 With horny hand and labour-wrinkled brow,
 Hardened and hollowed by the forge's smart,
 To hold the hat, and play the cadger's part.
 It is not so unjust, nor he the worst,
 Being the oldest, to give in the first.
 Let me return to my accustomed task.
 I've done. Take no offence at what I ask."

There was a pause.

One rose, with furious pace
 Strode to me, and hissed,
 " Coward !" in my face.

My heart turned icy cold. My eyes with blood
 Were blinded as, awhile, confused I stood,
 Seeking in vain the man to realise
 Who thus disgraced me in my fellows' eyes.

It was a stalwart, dissipated scamp,
 Pale from the reflex of the late street lamp ;
 A haunter of low balls, and hops, with curls
 On either temple, like a mincing girl's !
 Grinning, he fixed on me his mocking stare,
 The others looking on with troubled air ;
 While o'er me crept a glow of burning heat,
 And I could hear my heart's loud, angry beat.
 With clenched hands to my brow, I suddenly
 And wildly cried—

" Let wife and young ones die !
 Yes, be it so ! To work I'll not return !
 But as I live, I swear, you who dare spurn
 And thus outrage my misery shall pay
 The satisfaction in a bitter way !
 We'll fight, in fashion that our betters use !
 The time ? The weapon ? It is mine to choose ;
 It shall be now. And these-sledge hammers, they
 Shall serve, instead of swords, to end the fray.
 These, our companions, witnesses shall be,
 Which is the coward 'twixt yourself and me.
 Off with thy blouse and shirt ! Spit in thy hand,
 Insulter of the old, and take thy stand."

Frantic, I elbowed through the crowd a way
 To where two ponderous, rusty hammers lay
 On iron heap, in corner of the yard,
 And chose out two, and after some regard
 I flung the best to my insulter's feet,
 Who still laughed on, as at some comic treat,
 And mockingly picked up the massy tool,
 Sneered out—

“Thou poor old man, play not the fool!”

Without reply, towards the droll I strode,
 Swinging around my head the hammer's load,
 Tool of my trade, and weapon of my fight,
 Which then seemed to me as a feather light.
 I watched his shrinking glance, his coward eyes :
 No craven cur that crouched and trembling lies
 Beneath the lash, and pleads with abject face,
 Has the expression of a fear so base,
 As was upon that startled braggart's seen,
 Recoiling from my wrath, with haggard mien
 For refuge 'gainst the wall. Too late, alas !
 A blood-red misty veil appeared to pass
 Between me and those eyes that sued in vain :
 One single blow—I'd dashed his skull in twain !

I know it is a murder ! And the name
 We call a crime by, lessens not its blame.
 Duel or murder, what imports the word ?
 'Tis but a quibble, and would be absurd.
 Yes, there he lay—dead at my feet. Around
 His blood and brains defiled the reeking ground ;
 With outspread hands, pressed with convulsive might,
 Before my eyes, I veiled the ghastly sight,
 And sudden as the lightning's fiery train
 Flashed on my conscience the remorse of Cain.
 And there I stood, bereft of movement, power.
 Oh ! ne'er shall I forget that woful hour.

To seize me, my companions then drew nigh,
 Not harshly—pitying and reluctantly.
 I waved them off, and said with choking breath :
 “Leave me ! No need. I'll yield myself to death.
 They understood, and sadly drew away.
 Then taking off my cap—as in the day
 When in the works, for some poor needy soul—
 I gathered from the many pity's dole.
 I held it out to each, and said : “Who lends
 Help to the poor wife and the babes, good friends ?”
 I gathered ten francs for the sufferers there,
 Then I surrendered to the commissaire.
 Now you've the simple facts, both small and great,
 Of all my crime, and need not lend much weight

To strain the jaded nerves in strife
 That makes a living death of life,
 With blighting disappointments rife,
 Which gladly you,
 Unless for thought of babes and wife,
 Would hurry through.

Yes, there's the guerdon for the fight ;
 There through the darkness gleams the light
 Twinkling on Hope's obscured height
 In distance vast,
 Which duty strains its utmost might
 To reach at last.

Oh ! were it not for that sweet link
 That holds us from despair's fell brink,
 How oft the o'er-spent soul would sink,
 And yield the strife ;
 But thought of others makes us shrink
 From leaving life.

At that sweet fount we draw new will,
 And energy to battle still
 'Gainst odds and disadvantage, till
 Relenting fate
 Exhausts the quiver of dire ill,
 And spares at late.

THE BENEDICTION.*

Freely translated from the French.

I held the rank of serjeant in the line
 When we took Saragossa eighteen-nine ;
 And, if the simple truth I needs must say,
 It was a bloody and atrocious day.
 The town being taken, every house as well,
 We had to storm, each one a citadel
 Close barricaded, where did treason lurk,
 From roofs and windows doing deadly work.
 " 'Tis the priest's orders " was the muttered word,
 Through clenched teeth, that in our ranks was heard ;

* I have forgotten, and have no means of learning, the name of the author, or I should be proud to ascribe the honour where 'tis due.

And when we saw one in the distance fly—
 Though we had fought from dawn unceasingly,
 With eyes all scorched with burning dust, and mouth
 Bitter and dry with cartridge-powder drouth—
 Gaily we opened fire on him—Crack ! crack !
 And down went broad-brimmed hat and cassock black.
 My own battalion through a narrow lane
 Marched on, each eye in eager, watchful strain ;
 The sky all red and glowing with the ire
 Of blazing piles, as from a forge's fire ;
 There women's death-shrieks rent the heavy air,
 Man's deeper curse of hatred and despair ;
 At every footstep striding o'er the dead,
 Who thick along the reeking way were spread,
 Now stooping down to enter some low den,
 With bloody bayonets coming out again,
 Marking with gory cross the crumbling wall,
 For " Death " had been the word " for one and all ;"
 For in these close defiles we had to mind
 To leave no lurking enemy behind.
 No warlike march, no drum nor trumpets sound ;
 We seemed in gloomy silence stiffly bound.
 The anxious veterans closed their ranks *sans bruit*,
 And lent new courage to each raw recruit.

But at a narrow corner suddenly,
 We heard in French the loud confused cry,
 "*A l'aide !*" and starting off with eager bound,
 The cause of the alarm we quickly found.
 A company of spruce, trim, grenadiers,
 In broken tumult and confused fears,
 Driven with ignominy from the porch,
 And down the steps of an old convent church,
 By twenty monks, true demons, wild and black,
 With tonsored crowns and crosses front and back ;
 Unsandalled, and with bloody arms all bare,
 Their crucifixes waving in the air ;
 The sign of peace made instrument of strife,
 Salvation's symbol, now destroying life.
 The onslaught had been deadly. At the word
 A volley from our ranks was promptly poured,
 Coldly, mechanically, as machines,
 For we were wearied with the horrid scenes
 We had passed through ; and I am sure our men
 Felt more like murderers than soldiers then.
 This group of heroes horrible and wan,
 We swept them down like stubble to a man,
 And presently at this vile action's close,
 When the thick wreaths of curling smoke arose,
 We saw a confused heap where they had stood,
 From which down trickled a cascade of blood

From step to step, beyond the yawning porch,
 And star-like lights within the sombre church.
 The faint, soft langour of the incense breath
 Reached us through all the smoke and blood and death ;
 While in the background, in the altar choir,
 As though unconscious of the strife and fire,
 A tall, white-headed priest turned tranquil there,
 Devoutly finishing the evening prayer.

This bitter memory, so full of pain
 As I recount it, I behold again :
 The antique convent with its Moorish front,
 The pile of dead monks with the glow upon 't ;
 Of the red sunset which that moment broke,
 And caused the blood-bedabbled steps to smoke ;
 And in the shadow of the porch's frame
 The priest, the altar, and the taper's flame ;
 And we rude sons of carnage struck with awe,
 And feeling like poltroons—that, that I saw.

True, at that time I was but little loth
 To launch the impious jeer or reckless oath :
 For—vain and sacrilegious wanton jest,
 It is remembered, in the precinct blessed—
 We having seized a chapel's holy shrine,
 Looted the sacred plate and drank the wine,
 To gain the witty and dare-devil's name
 My pipe I lighted at the altar flame.
 I was a vile young swasher, like the rest,
 It must, in calmer age, be well confessed ;
 Smoke, drink, and swear, and swing the sabretache,
 And kiss the girls, and twirl the proud moustache ;
 The worst you thought of me, the worst believed—
 Take my word for it, you'd be less deceived ;
 But that old holy man, so calm, so white,
 Struck me with terror of the reverend sight.
 " Fire," cried our officer ;

But no one stirred.

The priest must certainly have heard the word ;
 But not a tremor's sign the order lent,
 As he turned round to give the sacrament ;
 For now the mass had to the moment come
 To bless the faithful, through the sacred gloom,
 With upraised arms, each trembling soldier saw
 Him sign the cross in air with *l'ostensoir*,
 With the same tranquil air of holy ease
 As though all present were his devotees.
 Then his rich voice in psalm-like sweetness rose
 To speak the holy office's sacred close—
 Like to each curé in his *oremus*—
 Said—

" Benedicat vos, omnipotens Deus."

Once more the same ferocious voice cried—

“Fire !

“This coward shrinking doth my patience tire.”

Then one of ours—I shame to tell the tale—

Levelled and fired. The godly man turned pale ;

But still his hands and eyes raised to the sky,

With holy zeal his face shone brilliantly—

“Pater et Filius,”

He went on.

What rage

Or veil of blood could then the brain engage,

That from our ranks another shot let fly,

He who knows all things may decide, not I.

The monk, one hand upon the altar rail

Leaned, for his other powers seemed to fail ;

The other, still upraised in act to bless,

Traced in the air the sign of holiness,

For the third time the sign of pardon made ;

And, with closed eyes, in feeble accents said—

“Et Spiritus Sanctus”—

And the final word

In the deep silence was distinctly heard—

Then fell stone dead.

We rested mute as death ;

Each hardened trooper held his panting breath ;

His heart with horror chilled and filled with gloom

Before that murder and that martyrdom ;

The drummers beat a solemn roll, and then,

With one low voice we murmured all, “Amen.”

N A T U R E .

THERE is music in the air

Floating up the valley fair,

Mixture sweet of murmurs rare,

Blending into nameless hum ;

And the dappled shadow scuds

O'er the meads and waving woods :

As a beauty's changeful moods,

Shades and sunbeams come.

Lo ! the restless, billowy sway ;

Lo ! the life in every spray ;

The dance of leaves and flowers gay

In flutter, whirl, and swing ;
 Scent the sweet wind's perfumed breath,
 Fresh distilled from bower and heath,
 And bramble brake and clover wreath,
 And daisy fairy ring.

Being grows a pure delight,
 Mind and body both unite
 Their cheerful functions swift and bright,
 Responsive to the spell ;
 And juster, clearer thoughts are given
 Of earth and man and God and heaven,
 And veils of doubt and dread are riven,
 And conscience counsels well.

House not, over-much to brood
 In carking care or dreamy mood ;
 Healthful life must be renewed
 By Nature's communing.
 Both duties low and duties high
 Lose half their gloomy mystery,
 For action, air, and sun, and sky
 Must lusty purpose bring.

THE DEAD CHILD'S FROCK.

Freely translated from the French of M. MANUEL.

In a dim garret a domestic strife
 Is waged between a workman and his wife.
 He had o'er night been drinking ; woke o'er late,
 Brutal and discontented and irate.
 With eyes all dim and bloodshot, and an air
 No sober, honest working man should wear.
 His meal was unprepared, his temper sour,
 For the poor woman had mistook the hour.
 All was disorder in the room. Of course,
 His own misconduct made her fault the worse.
 And he, though culpable, in angry tone,
 Reproves her for her fault, to screen his own.
 "Where have you been ? What have you been about ?
 I famish here while you are gadding out.

A man's to slave, and suffer all neglect,
 While his wife gossips, worse, as I suspect."
 "I've been to search for work, for while you drink
 Some one must earn the living, I should think :
 Money for food and fire and rent,
 If earned by you, are at the ' public ' spent."
 "I'll drink whene'er I please." "Aye, verily !"
 "I'll do whate'er I like." "Then so will I."
 "Will you, you saucy jade !" He frantic rose,
 And falls from angry words to brutal blows ;
 And suddenly the contest waxes rife
 With all the horrors of domestic strife.
 Shrieks, oaths, and insults, and reproaches dire,
 All bitter taunts that anger can inspire ;
 All painful memories ; all past regret ;
 Each rancour that can wound and chafe and fret,
 With mutual spleen and recklessness employed,
 Love wrecked, and future happiness destroyed.
 At last the man in wildest choler cries :
 "I'll make an end of all these vagaries.
 I'm weary of them ; every day the same
 Old stale complaints, scolding, or weeping game ;
 It is enough to drive a fellow mad
 To lead the kind of life I've lately had—
 A home where every evil chance I meet :
 On such conditions life's a precious treat !
 I stand no longer what too long I bore.
 Home ! Why, it's hell ! and I'll come home no more."
 There was a boding silence for awhile,
 When the wife answered, with a painful smile,
 As she wiped off a tear, with trembling hand,
 In broken utterance : "I understand.
 Well, then, we'll separate ; 'tis overlong
 That I have suffered your neglect and wrong.
 You have oft threatened me with this before :
 I'll meet your wish, and be your slave no more.
 I've borne too much ; too long have patient been,
 Suffering your lazy slight and drunken spleen.
 Life is a misery, a martyrdom.
 You're right ; it is a hell, and not a home !
 Go ! leave me, then. Be free, and so shall I ;
 I shall survive your loss—at least, I'll try.
 'Tis quite enough to have worked for all, while you
 Idle and waste among your drunken crew.
 And, come what may, I've eyes and fingers yet ;
 I shall contrive my living still to get.
 Go ! Drink, your friend, awaits you. Go !
 And sleep to-night where the drinks leads you to.
 Drunkard ! No more to you I'll ope the door ;
 We part ! and your complaints, and mine are o'er."
 "Agreed," in some surprise, the man replies ;
 "But wait a moment : you no doubt surmise

That I shall leave the furniture and traps—
 At least, what's left of them—to you, perhaps.
 No ! furniture and linen, pots and pans ;
 Plates, spoons, and dishes ; teacups, saucers, cans—
 Of every scurrick here I claim my share.
 It is my right, and what is right is fair.
 I'll not be turned off, like some beggar chap,
 Carrying nought but jacket, vest, and cap.
 The half of everything, as mine, I claim ;
 And you, of course, shall fare and share the same.”
 “ You're right ! The half is yours ! I'd like to know
 Who worked and saved to get them, I or you ;
 Whose courage and whose self-denying care
 May you be thankful to there's aught to share ?
 Oh ! my poor home, whose care has been my pride,
 My only one, since my dear infant died !
 But never mind ! I am contented too,
 Being strangers now, to nothing owe to you.”
 And now behold the scene : on every side
 They turn, and seize, and angrily divide
 Chairs, household gear ; each humble item found
 Is weighed, examined, clutched, and strewn around.
 The fever to depart has seized the man :
 Silent, impatient, o'er the place you can
 Fancy him, making a confusion wild.
 All ransacked, all incongruously piled,
 Displaced, and overturned, each rush-bound seat,
 All's topsy-turvy in the sad retreat.
 Ransacked each drawer, everything pell-mell ;
 What might have been a paradise made hell.
 The impious sacrilege, the eager hunt,
 Is pressed, while beaded sweat stands on his front.
 A nameless pillage and confusion spread
 On floor and table, window-seat, and bed.
 A lamentable sight, to grieve the heart,
 To see each one disputing for a part.
 “ There, take you that ; I this, a glass, a plate ;
 We shall be equal now at any rate.
 These candlesticks divide ; the sheets we share ;
 A blanket each is nothing less than fair.
 Unluckily we can't divide the bed ;
 You take it—I the mattress claim instead.”
 And thus proceed they in the headstrong course
 To wreck their home by self-imposed divorce.

The sad division to an end draws near,
 The cold day closes to a night more drear,
 When suddenly the workman's wandering eyes
 On a dark shelf a folded packet spies—
 An old dim, dusty bundle tied with string,
 Like a neglected and forgotten thing.

"What's that?" he grumbles. "Something we've forgot?
 Let's see if it's worth sharing or if not.
 Some valuable treasure, I should say,
 To be so folded up and hid away;
 Something held back and secreted, to serve
 And answer for a fall-back and reserve."
 He quick plucks off the string with which 'tis bound,
 Takes off the wrap, and casts it on the ground.
 "What's here? They're baby clothes! A cap, a frock!"
 Their sudden glances meet, as with a shock,
 Each recognises that which now appears,
 After the long forgetfulness of years,
 The faded vestments of a long lost child,
 Which on their early days of love had smiled.
 Neither can speak; but each with painful gaze,
 Calls back the thoughts of happy, early days.
 Before their minds their infant loved has past,
 Alive, in her first robe—alas! her last.
 A tremour seems to run through either frame,
 And on each lip is breathed their infant's name.
 "Oh! these must be for me," the husband cries.
 "For you? No!" turning pale, the wife replies;
 "You shall not have them; they are mine. 'Twas I
 Who made and broidered them when none were by;
 I long have kept them, and I still would keep,
 Sometimes to smile upon, sometimes to weep.
 When I was happy they were my delight;
 When sad, I've oft consoled me with their sight.
 Take all; restore me but that cap and dress
 To kiss and weep o'er in my loneliness.
 Oh, my sweet darling! why did heaven recall
 The blessing that he sent, so loved of all,
 So good, so beautiful. Alas! since she
 Was taken from me, all is changed for me."

She, with a trembling step, in silence takes
 Them from his hands, who no resistance makes.
 Silent, immovable, long time she stands
 Clutching the infant vestments in her hands.
 With tearful eyes, the little robe is pressed
 With loving tenderness upon her breast.
 The little Sunday cap and pinafore
 Convulsively she kisses o'er and o'er;
 Trembling, refolds them as before they were,
 And wraps and binds them with an eager care,
 In low breath murmuring: "'Tis too much of hate;
 I've learned your cruelty of heart too late."
 "Too late?" bursts forth the man in anguish wild;
 "Are you so sure of that? And since our child
 Speaks to us from on high, with sweet appeal,
 Rekindling love, and teaching us to feel,

Let you and I renounce the grievous sin
 We dreamed of, and a better life begin.
 I feel my heart with love revived to yearn,
 And she in those dear relics to return,
 To chide me for perversity of heart.
 Oh ! say you pardon me ; I cannot part."
 With a deep penitence, his head is bowed,
 And in his outstretched hands he weeps aloud.
 She runs to him : " You weep ! oh, weep no more.
 Forget ! forgive ! and live as once before ;
 We may be happy still, if we but strive
 To love as when our darling was alive."

THE MEMORY OF PAST JOY.

THERE is a soft and soothing power,
 When calling back the memory fair,
 Of some sweet spot or some bright hour,
 In which the moment's golden were ;
 That make associations sweet,
 Combine to leave a spell behind,
 No after-world's mishaps you meet,
 Can cancel in the grateful mind.

As some choice foil, or rarer fern,
 The herbal's virgin leaves compress,
 To which in later times we turn
 To contemplate their loveliness ;
 Though quelled by time their verdant tint,
 Their forms of beauty still remain,
 And their suggestive shows reprint
 The memory with joy again.

Then let the flowers, and not the weeds,
 The sunshine, not the shadow, cling,
 The kindly word, the gracious deed,
 In our remembrances to bring ;
 Renewal of the pristine charm
 That they imparted to the mind,
 To keep the spirit fresh and warm,
 To cheerfulness and good inclined.

THE EMIGRANT'S RETURN.

A SONG.

(Set to Music.)

As here I sit beneath the shade
 Of this old cypress tree,
 Where rest in peace all those who made
 This life a charm to me,
 What sweet but touching mem'ries rise,
 What phantom hopes appear,
 What warped and blighted destinies,
 To make the future drear !
 As sinks the sun 'neath tropic wave,
 The night comes quickly on ;
 The light of life to me they gave,
 But now that hope is gone.
 And on the restless worldly tide,
 Uncheered by guiding ray,
 I drift upon the desert wide,
 In blank and dire dismay.

The dark'ning cloud of adverse fate,
 Obscured my father's home,
 Forced me, in early manhood's state,
 To foreign regions roam.
 Duty my guide, and love my stay,
 Hope's cheering presence led,
 And pointed to a brighter day,
 With Fortune's gifts o'erspread,
 When I might claim my Mary's hand,
 And soothe my parent's pain,
 As 'neath a bright enchanter's wand
 No sorrow can remain ;
 And how the glorious prospect gave
 New vigour to my will,
 While all the future seem'd to have
 A brighter promise still.

But while in absence lone I toiled,
 And laboured not in vain,
 The icy hand of Death hath foiled
 My efforts of all gain :
 Those loved ones three—my parents dear,
 And she my heart's young bride—
 Within the space of one short year,
 Have in my absence died.

And if I do not pray for death
 To end this bitter ill,
 Oh, heaven ! 'tis that thy creatures' breath
 Is 'pendent on thy will ;
 The going hence, or staying here,
 Thine to command alone,
 And thine the harvest of the year,
 Whose hands the seeds have sown.

GOOD BOOKS.

YE bridges, spanning the broad stream of time,
 Framed in strong prose or decorative rhyme,
 Simple in structure or in plan sublime ;

Your outward looks
 May bear the stains of ages and decay,
 And your trim newness may have passed away ;
 Yet miss we not in ye that fair array,
 Rare, good old books.

For ye do link the Now with What has been ;
 By ye in abstract and detail are seen
 Time's pageant through each parti-coloured scene,
 In varied show,
 Of good and evil—humbleness or pride,
 Grandeur and meanness stalking side by side,
 Truth's steadfast march and Falsehood's devious glide
 The *cortège* through.

But most ye charm us when your spirit's come,
 And bide with us as in a haunted room ;
 Calm, friendly ghosts, minus all dread or gloom,
 But mild and sage
 With the dumb eloquence of lettered worth,
 Pouring the goodly streams of wisdom forth
 As deathless legacies bequeathed to earth
 From every age.

As kindly tutors, round they seem to sit,
 Delighting with philosophy and wit,
 Or fancy framed in fine poetic fytte,
 Earnest or light ;
 Till, by the spelling presence lured away,
 We seem as living in some long-passed day,
 When mind was weighted with less earthly clay
 To check its flight.

Then doth the power within us seem to wake,
 And long the lethargy of sloth to break ;
 And tho't be little, still that effort make
 To better state ;
 To note the fairness of the Just and True,
 Clever and Beautiful, most like in you,
 Will wake the longing to be something too—
 Good, if not great.

To plant a forest is a tribute paid
 To coming generations ; so the shade
 Of one lone oak a blessing may be made
 To some faint soul.
 There is proportion both of good and ill ;
 The larger benefit will challenge still ;
 But ne'ertheless the lesser is not *nil*—
 Parts form the whole.

Evil seeks us ; but goodness must be sought
 In the fair monuments itself hath wrought.
 The mind grows barren upon inbred thought,
 And Nature looks
 For some renewal of the mental seed,
 Purest from nettle-rust or error-weed ;
 So much't behoves us all we can to read
 Good, wholesome books.

ADIEU TO THE OLD YEAR.

ADIEU, Old Year ! though on thy wing
 There's many a tear-drop like a dew,
 And many sorrows to thee cling,
 Yet I will sing farewell to you.

And once again, ere twelve has toll'd,
 While gazing on thy pallid face,
 And, ere the new succeeds the old,
 Can I not yet some pleasure trace ?

Yes, many blessings I can see,
 Which when enjoyed I did not heed ;
 And thou hast been, Old Year, to me
 Often a very friend indeed.

Adieu, Old Year ! I'll not withhold
 My thanks for many a brighter ray,
 Since thy last annual billow roll'd
 Into Time's dark funeral bay.

Adieu, Old Year ! as parting friends
 Pause on the threshold-stone to change
 The last warm grip before one wends
 Into dim night and dreary range,—

So ere you quit us for the waste,
 Receding indistinctly blue
 Into the track-worn weary past,
 Accept, Old Year, my kind Adieu !

IRISH SONG—PENNY MOLOY.

My coat it is ragged and tattered ;
 My hat it is brimless and battered ;
 To my breeches there's sorry a button ;
 My shirt is a puzzle to put on ;
 My stockings are darned with all colours and hues ;
 And there's little up'-leather or soles to my shoes ;
 And yet, I'll go bail, if you search through Kinsale
 You'll not meet with a happier boy.
 For my heart is as light as a lark in its flight,
 And I'm loved by sweet Penny Moloy.

By blue devils or care untormented,
 With what falls in my way I'm contented ;
 For riches I ne'er fret or bother ;
 One day passes as gay as another ;
 I've no fear of any thief picking my pocket ;
 My door may stand open—there's no need to lock it,
 For there's nothing to steal. Yet search through Kinsale,
 You'll not meet with a happier boy.
 For a dance, or a fight, or a song's my delight,
 And I'm loved by sweet Penny Moloy.

But this life—all so happy-go-lucky,
 So devil-may-care and so plucky,
 So pleasant and gay in the spending—
 I must bring to a finish and ending.

I must buckle to work and leave fooling and drink ;
 Of the comforts of Penny, my darling, must think.
 For should Poverty's frown on my cabin look down,
 From my heart it would banish all joy
 To see care dim the light that now glances so bright
 In the eyes of sweet Penny Moloy.

Another termination of the last verse :

I must buckle to work and leave fooling and drink ;
 With no turf on the hearth and no money to chink,
 I've a doubt on my mind you'd be puzzled to find
 In the world such an unhappy boy
 As I, with no store, and the wolf at the door,
 Were I married to Penny Moloy.

AS CALMLY I LAY SLEEPING.

SONG—*Set to Music.*

(Suggested by Sidney Dobel's " *This Morn I Lay a Dreaming ;*"
" England in the Time of War.")

As calmly I lay sleeping,
 This bright and summer morn,
 Around my fancy creeping
 This vision 'gan to dawn :
 My Willie's ship came sailing
 From far upon the sea,
 And Willie's voice came hailing
 Born on the wind to me.
 Yeo, oh, my true love !
 Yeo, oh, my joy !
 I'm coming back to you, love,
 Your constant sailor boy.

In blissful hope awaking
 The illusive vision fled ;
 The spell of slumber breaking,
 A sad'ning influence shed.
 My head sunk on my pillow
 In disappointed pain ;
 I slept, and o'er the billow
 Was wafted once again :
 Yeo, oh, my true love !
 Yeo, oh, my joy !
 I'm coming back to you, love,
 Your constant sailor boy.

This time the welcome greeting
 Was too distinct and clear ;
 For drowsy slumber's cheating
 That mocks Sleep's credent ear.

'Twas no illusion haunted
 My restless weary brain,
 But Willie's self that chanted
 The happy gay refrain—
 Yeo, oh, my true love !
 Yeo, oh, my joy !
 I have come back to you, love,
 Your constant sailor boy.

ON THE CROOKED SHORE OF DINGLE BAY.

ON the crooked shore of Dingle Bay
 I sat and watched the ships at sea,
 And wished and wished some lucky wind
 Would blow me home a fortune kind.
 My grey frieze coat is patched and old,
 The girl I love has powers of gold :
 Were I to wish to own the moon,
 I'd get my wishes just as soon.
 Och hone ! Och hone ! My heart is sad !
 I've ne'er a joy in life, bedad ;
 The mocking wind laughs me to scorn,
 For on Black Friday Pat was born.

I took to drink to drown my grief,
 For my throat was dry as barrel beef ;
 But, bad cess to Fortune's treachery,
 More moist and briny was my eye.
 What cheers the gay makes sorrow sad ;
 To drink's to jump to worse from bad ;
 My heart is ice, and whiskey's ire
 May melt, but cannot give it fire.
 Och hone ! Och hone ! From Arrah's eye
 I'd drink the fire by which I die ;
 While, heedless as the candle's flame,
 She, bright in beauty, shines the same.

In the army I've a mind to 'list—
 By not a soul should I be miss'd ;
 But, och ! the leaving Arrah ! sure
 Her absence how should I endure ?
 To steal her window 'neath at night,
 And watch the flickering candle-light—
 It's worth the world to see it shine—
 Or catch her shadow on the bline (blind).

Och hone ! Och hone ! my shadow's size
 Dwindles each day before my eyes,
 And soon I fear this hapless blade
 Won't cast the shadow of a shade.

Another termination of the last verse :

Och hone ! Och hone ! Sweet sleep or rest
 Is then a stranger to my breast ;
 What would she think (if thus I pine)
 If she could catch a glimpse of mine ?

PARTED.

THOU art far, far away, and the ocean's rude billow
 Is spread like a death, parting both of us now ;
 Your head never more on my bosom may pillow,
 Nor neighbourhood call back the thought of thy vow.
 Yet oft, when the arm of thy husband shall fold thee,
 And the kiss of endearment shall press on thy lip,
 The fang of reproach like a fury shall hold thee,
 And give thee the venom of conscience to sip.

Thou may'st nestle thy babe to thy bosom, delighted,
 And dote on the starry eyes gazing on thine ;
 But a look shall peer from them shall make thee affrighted,
 Recall some expression or feature of mine.
 And the guilt of thy treason shall sully the pleasure,
 And taint the delight, of maternity's kiss :
 I shall spectre thy every moment of leisure,
 And shadow the light of each transient bliss.

Thou hast but one hope from sure self-condemnation
 (For oblivion of that which has been cannot be) ;
 That refuge must spring from the degeneration ;
 That perfidy surely must labour in thee.
 Thou must shelter the future in callous unheeding,
 And sophisticate nature with spurious aid ;
 But, beware ! lest the infamous impulse, inbreeding,
 On the innocent soul of thy infant be laid.

Should its spirit be generous, loyal, and tender,
 Canst thou harbour the thought of how little the share
 Of these heavenly elements thou didst engender,
 Or think that the thistle the fig-fruit will bear ?

Thou hast chosen the vile, downward path to be treading ;
 Thou wilt reap of the harvest of baseness thou'st sown ;
 Reflection shall curse thee at boarding and bedding
 Thou art thrall'd by thy perjury's durable zone.

'Tis most likely we never again shall foregather,
 That your eye ne'er may meet the reproach of my gaze ;
 And had I the choice, for my part I would rather
 Resentment should wither as nature decays.
 Could I call back respect where affection is banished,
 Could I bury the past and believe as of yore,
 You were worth a regret ; but that solace is vanished
 And Ichabod's writ' to your name evermore.

THE HAPPY VALLEY.

IN the girdle of hills snugly nestles the valley,
 Like an emerald costly, in ruder enclosing ;
 An opulence hid to preserve it from spoilage ;
 A privileged glen too remote for intrusion
 Of populous worry, or traffic, or commerce ;
 So nicely secreted by barren approaches,
 And horrid escarpments, and gorges, and boulders,
 Like dragons defending and barring all access
 With misleading *culs de sac*, ending in chaos.
 Deceptive ways, upward and downward to ruin,
 I seeming world's-end, with no further ongoing
 But one well-screened portal, with so little promise
 Not one in a thousand would think to essay it,
 So hopeless a blockage its aspect presages.
 A sheer wall of granite the mountain uprises,
 No visible inlet when almost within it,
 That only by dreamy, unconscious ontending—
 As an o'erweary man sleeps and still trudges onward,
 Or the boat for a time, when its sail has been lowered,
 Feels its former momentum—just so unexpected
 I found myself suddenly edging a fissure,
 Like an inverted V, where the top of the mountain
 Each side slanted inward, and rocklets enormous
 Masked the gap—you might fancy some power Titanic
 Had laboured with coigns in the granite eternal.
 It was dark as the antre of monsters nocturnal ;
 The ooze of the hill-springs bespattered its pavement,
 Its slanting sides dripping with stalactites pendent,
 And at its dark basement two tunnels were channelled,
 Deep-stained and rusty, though crystal their waters.

A fairy-like harmony came from the hollow,
 Like dulcimers beaten by hands without cunning—
 So wild, yet so musical ; sweet, without melody ;
 A shower of tinkling, like rain drops on harp strings.
 Awhile I stood wondering, gazing, and listening,
 As of old a knight-errant enchantment encountered.
 What allurements resistless, indefinite peril ?
 What mystery gloomy, adventure forewarning ?
 The lure of the unknown provoking to knowledge ;
 But what expectation, beyond a vague notion
 Of vast rocky wonders or subterrene marvels,
 Could urge me to fathom the depth of the cavern ?
 I had none—no intention to penetrate further
 Than just the dim lighting the entrance afforded
 Might serve to direct me again to its portal.
 My thought was, the cavern would, inward expanding,
 Spread to deep-vaulted chambers and galleries darksome ;
 And for some way it widened, and then grew more straitened,
 Then bent in a crescent with rugged pathway ;
 And the edge of the cavern behind me obtruded
 Between the dim pencil of daylight afforded
 By the cleft in the mountain through which I had entered.
 A step or two further, and all would be darkness.
 So, pausing for counsel 'twixt longing and prudence,
 Their promptings opposing produced some perplexing
 Suggestions of wretches in catacombs, wildered,
 In fruitless endeavours escape to discover ;
 Of hunger, despairing, and death super-awful ;
 Of adventures remembered in legends romantic ;
 Of treasures by accident strangely discovered,
 Of maidens by actions heroic delivered
 (The wild diorama of lightning-like objects
 That so fleetly sweep over the disc of reflection).
 Half had I determined on prompt retrogression,
 When I found myself still, but with caution advancing—
 The damp wall for my guide, as I groped in the darkness,
 Over detritus scrambling that cumbered the pathway,
 The gap trending still with a gradient increasing,
 But so closely contracted, with both hands extended,
 I could grapple the opposite sides of the passage.
 Then presently grew a perceptible dawning
 Of feebly-reflected light, faintly designing
 The uneven form of one side of the hollow ;
 And it strengthened and tempted me onward and onward,
 Till the line of the alley grew straight ; and the distance
 Was cut by a glimmer of daylight far upward,
 That illumined the stretch of the subterrene gully,
 Which was channelled and strewn like the bed of a torrent.
 Soon the sky shone above ; but a chasm, sheer-sided,
 Bounded all save before, where a grey-headed mountain—
 Like a sentinel posted, in solitude gloomy—
 Seemed to bar further progress with frowning defiance.

But closer inspection presented an outlet
 At a junction of channels. A smooth slope, turf-tufted,
 Gave ascent to a shelf at the base of the mountain.
 This level I followed, until half its circle
 Was measured, with prospect restricted and sterile,
 When the gorge fairly opened. And Oh, to what beauty!
 Description is feeble to give a conception,
 Though the effort recalling to mind its entrancements
 May reflect an enjoyment, though dim and imperfect.
 The precipitous gorge, in a lateral bending,
 By a rampart of pine-covered summits was curtained,
 And, lost in the regions of solitude, vanished,
 As a creature of gloom shuns a brighter surrounding;
 And the stern and the awful retired to grey distance,
 There only in pallor of misty enshrouding,
 Peered over the smiling and glowing perspective.
 Above me, to right and to left, the two summits
 Shot up with a grandeur evoking my wonder,
 But they joined at my standpoint, and, gently descending,
 Left the vista that held me entranced unobstructed.
 There were sunshine and shadow so charmingly scattered;
 There were outlines imposing that melted in softness;
 Long even-ridged hills by their silvan adorning,
 Redeemed from the want of variety's magic.
 Repose in its dreamy and sweet delectation,
 And motion in divers effective contrastings;
 Bright marvellous mixtures and tintings of colour,
 With minglings of music each lost in the blending,
 And life-lusty life in a circle of torpor:
 Vast distance combined with ærial finish
 To strengthen and soften to fullest perfection.
 A Paradise earthly for purity's dwelling,
 An infant of summer and softness all rosy,
 Lapped and fondled by guardian nurses of terror.
 Here, oblivious of all that was worldly or wicked,
 Its denizens surely you well might imagine
 Could tranquilly linger remote from all longings,
 Or burning, or bitterness, warping and mining
 The unstable bases of unbounded commerce.
 Here habit might fashion out simpler requirements,
 And wants to Necessity's dictates conforming—
 Superfluity's tyranny freely disable.
 Here existence might flow like yon stream of the meadow,
 Reflecting a happiness bright as the sparkle
 Of sunbeams that flash on its mirror-like surface,
 With consciences clear as the heaven that hovers
 Above the warm cloudlets which dapple its bosom;
 That though of the earth, being mortal, the final
 Unshunnable Death none might hope to escape from;
 Yet sin, its twin brother, could here find no harbour—
 His lures of temptation be powerless and futile.
 That the earthly sojourning in this Happy Valley

Would be—if, in truth, there's a heaven hereafter—
 The meet preparation and gradual fitting
 (For no earthly spot could excel it in beauty),
 For that bright abode where the spirit rejoices,
 Where the passions, emotions, and human aspirations
 Are lost in beatitude endless and holy.
 But ah ! Here, alas ! came reflections disturbing,
 That mortality's penalty knew no exception ;
 That the Adam in man and the Eve in earth's daughters
 Would work their unshunnable consequent issue ;
 That not from the outward comes sinning and sorrow ;
 That not by its aspect is goodness determined,
 But judgment deluded by seeming and showing,
 And, evil in guises alluring bedecking,
 Virtue's self would entice to unconscious perdition :
 That on this side of death no perfection could flourish,
 And death only solve if our future be perfect ;
 That allowance for frailty in others may strengthen
 In us what is tending to blessedness, better
 Than straitness, harsh child of self-glorification.
 Expectation run riot, or fancy in fervour,
 May fashion ideal conditions transcendent ;
 But the humourist's wit was impregnate with wisdom
 Who said, " In humanity's much human nature."
 Then, though in this Eden the serpent may linger,
 The antagonist-angels as well may inhabit ;
 Though e'en here the great duel of evil and goodness
 Its contest, unending, still waging may trouble.
 Durst I, wert thou sinless thy precincts invading,
 Confront thee undaunted, being sinful and human ?
 All welcome thy glory of hill, stream, and meadow,
 Thy sunshine, thy shadows, melodious murmurs ;
 Thy life and thy contrasts to outer oppression :
 Of solitude, barrenness, silence, and terror,
 As a city of refuge to me thou art welcome !

THE WISIL.

OH ! for the Dart the Scythian caught*
 When launched from Phœbus' burnished bow,
 That I might set wide space at nought,
 And traverse distance to and fro ;
 Glance at the wonder-spots of earth
 That lie between the opposing poles ;
 Contrast the fruitfulness and dearth,
 The gulfs and bays, where ocean rolls ;

* Abaris.

Soar to the snow-capped mountain peak ;
 Or fathom earth's mysterious caves ;
 Or float where mighty rivers break
 To chasm'd depths o'er rocky eves ;
 Where solitude supremely reigns,
 Or populations hive and swarm ;
 O'er sea's expanse, o'er desert plains—
 From rude to fair, from stern to calm ;
 Where Nature's massive mountain piles
 Pierce the keen, thin, and breathless air,
 And ice, and snow, and craggy styles
 Eternal brunt the solar glare ;
 Thorough primeval forests shade,
 Gorgeous in grand arborial pride,
 With quaint luxuriance arrayed,
 And endless shades of beauty dyed—
 Fantastic, gnarled, festooned, and fringed ;
 With star-like palms and fan-like ferns ;
 With broad leaves marvellously tinged,
 Guarding rich flowers like fairy urns ;
 And twining wreaths, and trailing bines,
 And pendent clusters, that in vain
 Essayed to top the giant pines,
 Were tending to the earth again ;
 Dim vista'd groves and bright arcades
 In virgin opulence profuse,
 With feathery denizens of shade,
 Matching the rainbow's prism'd hues ;
 And note, in Nature's untamed state,
 The tenants of the tangled brake,
 In bristling wrath, or rest sedate,
 Gambols grotesque, and amorous rake :
 To trace the links of parent love
 Through the long animated chain
 That insects, birds, and beasts approve
 (That soft'ning gift to all pertain) ;
 To watch the modes and methods given
 To prey—to guard in every kind
 The stealths and stratagems they're driven
 To adopt, the needs of life to find.
 Would the surmise be over-wild
 To deem that the observant mind
 Might trace in every prey beguiled
 Some parallel in human kind ;
 Or some similitude of force,
 Or craft, or cruelty, or greed,
 In man's all-grasping, restless course
 Of broader scope and greater need ?
 That want or wish to any end
 Suggests the means by which 'tis gained ?
 But man's facilities extend
 Through all the modes, where these are chained.

And, Oh ! the gift. Could it be mine
 To see and judge mankind at range
 In all conditions that combine
 To constitute the difference strange
 Of customs, creeds, and manners, thought,
 Built up like barriers, to oppose
 The oneness—which, as we are taught,
 Claims us—through that from which we rose ;
 To learn where good or evil's sway
 In greater or in lesser part,
 Or whether more advantage may
 Live in simplicity or art.
 If one low level makes mankind content
 With scant supply of poorest needs for all,
 Or startling contrast be the element
 That turns the sweet of civil life to gall,
 The naked savage in his earth-made cells
 May love his lodgment, as the wolf his den.
 No palace where Profusion proudly dwells
 Contrasts his meanness with more favoured men.
 The slave wins not his meal by toil so dire ;
 But when 'tis won, 'tis his own lawful spoil.
 He shares it with his wife, his babes, his sire ;
 No privilege holds mortgage o'er his toil.
 He shivers not that some may bravely shine ;
 He works not for another's wanton waste ;
 He does not furnish viand-feasts and wine
 Whereof he must not either scent or taste ;
 And if he misses all those fine delights
 That civil arts provide to sweeten care,
 His state to zests as vivid sure invite ;
 And lusty earnestness is ever there.
 Life is as valued, death appears less dread ;
 Few self-made wants perplex his simple plan.
 His urgent needs, procured, are doubly dear ;
 And habit fortifies content in man.
 And where Content resides—that blessed guest !—
 Slight chance that infelicity will dwell.
 To covet that we lack gives sure unrest :
 Know not the lack, and all will then be well.
 Desire is limitless : the more it climbs,
 The extended space engenders new desires.
 That which was thought enough in former times,
 Acquired, gives vigour to its longing ired :
 Like a disease that ever craves its bane,
 The poison-fare augments the morbid state,
 Feeding the source of irritable pain
 Till no remedial can the ill abate.
 Oh ! could I find that charmed spot
 Where care and greed alike were strange,
 There I'd elect to cast my lot,
 And never after seek to range.

Whatever clime or race among,
 If calm content found harbour there,
 My days and years would glide along
 Blissful as Eden's tenants were.

A RHYME OF THE RIVER.

DARKLY and sullenly, drearily cold,
 And yet through the darkness,
 Now freightless and barkless,
 Perturbed and swollen, the deep river rolled.
 A flicker and clicking,
 A whirling and licking,
 Informed through the Stygian gloom
 Of the letless career
 Of the dim torrent near,
 Like the unfended mouth of the tomb.
 My footfall woke an echo dull,
 A gust of wind, and then a lull ;
 When was heard the rushes quiver,
 And the pollard willow-branches rock'd,
 And with leafless weird-fingers mocked
 My wandering by that lonely river.

Distantly, luridly, tauntingly gleam,
 Like omens of evil,
 Through night's murky level,
 The sparse city lights, winking over the stream,
 Like spiteful, stealthy eyes
 Of ranc'rous enemies,
 Spying my desperate design
 The vain struggle to close
 In the long, deep repose,
 So much welcome to being like mine.
 As waned the hope did wax despair,
 Or way, or mean, or thoroughfare,
 So blocked seemed every channel there—
 Such channel, at least, as I would deign
 To take, for the end I would attain—
 Outworn in the strife, I'll end it—where ?

Hollowly, hungrily, luringly came,
 From the weltering flood
 On whose margin I stood,
 An answer, as from a demon, whose name

Some occult. malign charm
 Had up-conjured for harm ;
 And his coming congeal'd my blood.
 " Here's quiescent repose
 In the wave, in the ooze,"
 Repliedly answered the flood.
 A silence deeper than had been,
 Portentous, seemed to intervenc,
 As waiting my decision ;
 And thoughts came crowding thick and fast,
 And all the future and the past
 Were massed in one confus'd vision.

Feebly, retreatingly, languidly sped
 The strife of dread 'gainst will,
 The latter gaining still—
 Retiring firm, and then advancing dread.
 So weakened its rival
 By slight and deprival,
 His coming had lost its chief awe ;
 Resisting but in show
 Its stern, resistless foe,
 But to finally yield to his law.
 Nearing the steep and darksome board
 Where the swart torrent deepest pour'd,
 And round the piles the eddies roll'd ;
 And the blankness reigned o'er everything,
 And I crouched to make the final spring,
 When some one shrieked out, " For God's sake, hold !"

Eagerly, suddenly, dragged me away ;
 And so quick the surprise,
 Like a wink of the eyes,
 My anger, by wonder, was held at bay.
 Yes, for a surety,
 In the obscurity
 There stood a dim shadow of gloom,
 And in my confusion
 It seemed an illusion
 Of the dark-threatening spirit of doom.
 With ill-defined and cloudy sense,
 Now of relief and then suspense,
 Half angrily, half in surprise,
 And a vague perceptive touch of shame,
 And fear of what I could not name,
 Seized my bewildered faculties.

Silent and moody, confronted we stood,
 Short-breathing and glaring,
 Without either caring
 To speak, and at first, perhaps, neither could ;
 But the pause gave me space
 To contemplate the face

And the form of a woman of woe,
 Worn, wan, and piteous,
 Who finally spake thus
 With a mournfulness touching and low :
 " I came to die as you would die,
 And end my bitter destiny ;
 But I have had a better thought,
 And, though I covet quick relief
 From mem'ry, and disgrace, and grief,
 At this price it would be dearly bought.

" Remorsefully, thankfully, trying to pray,
 As I prayed years ago
 When an infant, although
 Then said by rote in my innocent way ;
 And many years gone by
 Since I last thought to try,
 How then to pray I scarcely knew,
 When the tread and jingle
 On the river's shingle
 Gave me notice, and you came in view.
 I had a warning, secret guess
 That some yoke-fellow in distress,
 Desperate of life, trouble-weary,
 Obeyed the desperate spirit's call
 To shorten suffering, life, and all,
 As I had, in this flood so dreary."

Shuddering, shamedly hiding her face,
 With hands pressed convulsive,
 Her worn weeds repulsive,
 Damp, theeadbare, and dabbled with miry trace ;
 Gaunt attenuation,
 Sombre desolation,
 Had impressed their ineffable brand.
 But, governing at length
 Her weakness by her strength,
 Her emotion was held in command.
 " Take time," she said ; " the stake is great ;
 There may be yet a darker fate
 Than that which you at present rue,
 Through penury, infamy, disdain,
 If I in suffering can remain ;
 And 'bide the issue, so can you."

Gently and unresisted she led
 Me aloof from the flood
 In an abstracted mood,
 Where the visioned past like a spectre fled,
 Where present was drowned ;
 But the lurid profound
 Of the future was ominous, dread.

And I searched in vain,
 Like a waif on the main,
 In the dark, where no hope-lights appear ;
 And febrile fancy lends the waste
 A charm of death, to be embraced
 As a luxury and blest release ;
 Where the bland winds, murmuring, whisper " Rest !"
 And a nymph, with soft and glowing breast,
 Woos fondly to her embrace of peace.*

Slowly and languidly dwindled the night.
 Side by side on the bank,
 'Mid the coarse herbage rank,
 Hemlock and nettle and dire aconite,
 That forlorn woman strove
 In her Magdalen love
 'Gainst a proud, stubborn, bitter will.
 She told her history
 To prove to me that I
 Had an optional future left still ;
 And ere the light of morning came
 She put despondency to shame,
 Broached in my soul a hidden source,
 A hopeful and bright-refreshing stream,
 That crisped and flashed and danced in the beam
 Where hope, faith, and energy gained force.

SAINT GODELIVE.

A BELGIC LEGEND.

(*Versified from the French.*)

YOUNG Godelive was the well-belovèd child
 Of Baron Humfrid, of Chateau Longfort :
 His wife, Ogiva, ever fondly smiled
 On their child's budding charms, that daily more
 Unto perfection's glowing blossom grew,
 Her cherished idol, and her husband's too.

To them she seemed as she were sent by heaven,
 The bright reward of lives so fair and good ;
 And the chaste dower of radiant beauty given
 From childhood's dawn to dreamy maidenhood
 Shone on her pure and stainless virgin front,
 An Angel's holy impress stamped upon't.

* The Calenture.

Like purest alabaster's veinless tint,
 And shining with the smoothest satin-glow,
 Rich raven tresses of resplendent glint,
 And with an even, faultless, archèd brow ;
 An eye of light, but beaming heavenly mild ;
 And lips that sadly, and yet sweetly, smiled.

Reproach, if it could touch her nature rare,
 Could spring from neither vice nor folly's birth,
 But from the constant melancholy there,
 As saintly piety o'ershadow'd mirth,
 A calm, devotional, and patient soul,
 With every evil impulse in control.

Her native graces, both of form and mind,
 With happy rules of culture did unite ;
 That beauty, virtue, talent, were combined
 In soft assemblage to inspire delight ;
 So that her praises far were bruited round
 Ere she had reached her adolescence' bound.

Soon, suitors, whom her father's wealth and fame
 Had first inspired, when her they saw and knew,
 Many who won by Mammon's 'lurements came
 Were doomed to feel a passion strong and true ;
 But none among them all did she affect :
 None would she choose as chevalier elect.

There came amidst the numerous suitor train
 (Oh, sorrow ! that it ever so befell !)
 Bertulfe, the young and fair-haired Chatelain,
 The Flammand Seigneur of the wild Ghistelles,
 Many a long and weary league away,
 Among the swampy marshes of Tournay.

Though oft her parents Godelive besought,
 She shrank reluctantly from making choice.
 Some terror's instinct secretly had wrought,
 And spell'd her with its low, mysterious voice ;
 And still, the more her parents fondly press,
 She loves the chances of a change the less.

" I'm over-young," she said, " to fitly heed
 The solemn duties of the marriage state,
 Inclining not to cares that must succeed,
 And dread the onus that on wives await.
 Best here with certain long-known love to hide
 Than hence with untried love away to ride."

The Baron Humfrid judged this nothing less
 Than the coy pretext of shy maidenhood,
 Which often masketh in a fine finesse
 Of disregard of that which most it would.
 So he resolved that he would promptly use
 His parent's right—himself her lord to choose.

Now, that fatality which often serves
 Heaven to approve within its chastening fire,
 The spirit which more fully heaven deserves
 By passing through an earthly ordeal dire,
 It chanced, or else by ordination fell,
 He chose Bertulfe, the Seigneur of Ghistelle.

Her parents' will was sacred as the Word,
 Whose high command she learn'd e'er to obey ;
 And yet her heart, with sad forebodings stirr'd,
 Was saddest on her hapless bridal day.
 Then followed days of revels, fêtes, and folly,
 Which brought not joy, but added melancholy.

To early home and loves she bade farewell,
 And went to other scenes as new and strange.
 She near'd the region of the fierce Ghistelle,
 And, shivering, glanc'd o'er the cheerless range
 Of lands uncultured, wild, and bare, and black
 On either side the cumbered swampy track.

Wild was the region, and the people more ;
 In costume strange, and of atrocious air ;
 Insatiate and keen for shedding gore ;
 With whom nought was too bad to do or dare :
 Each object, new and rude as it appears,
 Serves only to augment her former fears.

Oft in the progress Bertulfe's cruel mood
 Reveal'd itself by various trivial signs ;
 And oft for spaces he would mutely brood,
 His brow contracted in deep passion's lines.
 He seemed, as nearer to his tower he drew,
 A greater nervous restlessness to show.

Young Bertulfe's mother, with a cold disdain,
 Met her with greeting that like mockery seem'd.
 An ill-repress'd hate, hard to restrain,
 Maliciously from out her blear eyes gleamed ;
 And coldly her sarcastic words appeared
 To quell the son—for she was all he fear'd.

She was the genius of ill and strife,
 And age her evils only more confirm'd.
 She was with malice and with envy rife,
 And in her breast despite malignly germ'd.
 Cold, cruel, selfish, proud, and subtle too,
 Her son's wife was a *rival* to her view.

It possibly might be she could discern
 That Godelive was a creature all too pure
 To contrast with her spirit dark and stern ;
 For souls of evil rarely good endure.
 But be the motive whatsoe'er it might,
 She for her felt a deep, unbounded spite.

It was not long before her arts and wiles
 Adroitly roused suspicion in her son :
 Suggestive calumnies, whose breath defiles,
 The subtle thread of discontentment spun ;
 A fiendish raillery in every word ;
 Injurious thoughts, outspoken or inferr'd.

Her attributes of grace, her patient mien,
 The order of her beauty, furnished themes.
 Translated by the tongue of jaundiced spleen,
 Each favour as an imperfection seems ;
 And merit, shat should heighten beauty's claim,
 Only invoked antipathy and blame.

With uncomplaining sorrow, she could see
 Her husband's heart dissever'd from her own,
 And shrunk from raising discord that might be
 Engender'd 'twixt a mother and a son ;
 So quelled the grief and chagrin that would rise
 In duty's and devotion's exercise.

Daily, with him, aversion stronger grew.
 Still modest, gentle, patient, pious more,
 She wept in silence nightly vigils through.
 Her prayers in secret up to heaven would soar
 That on her husband's soul the light might fall
 Which would dispel his then tenebreous thrall.

At length, upon pretext as false as foul,
 In a lone chamber cruelly immur'd,
 On scanty nurture, under mean control,
 Outrage, derision, often she endured
 Whene'er her husband or his mother sought
 To add a pang to body or to thought.

In her lone state at last the trial sore
 Awoke resolve to free her from the weight
 Of persecution she in silence bore,
 But which had grown for sufferance too great.
 She watch'd for, and at length she found, the chance
 T' elude her stern oppressor's vigilance.

Through the dark night the dreary wastes she trod,
 Fasting by day, concealed she crouching lay ;
 Weary, and yet confiding still in God,
 The fugitive's director, hope, and stay ;
 Through ambuscades, pursuits, and sore distress
 She passed, with meek endurance measureless.

Fainting, at last she reached her sire's domain,
 The scene of former joys ; and on the breast
 Of loving parents she teem'd out her pain,
 And all her woes and sufferings confess'd.
 Though much of grief, yet more of ire approv'd
 Her sire at wrong wrought to the child he loved.

Promptly he made appeal to Count Baudouin
 To cite his vassal Bertulfe to show cause,
 And answer 'fore his powerful suzerain,
 In manner of the ancient feudal laws,
 And render justice for the cruel wrong
 And cruelty his child had suffered long.

Count Baudouin and the Bishop of Tournay
 Adjudged the Chatelain, at cost of pain,
 Of Church's thunder in its stern array,
 And martial power obedience to constrain,
 Humbly for pardon for the past to plead,
 And guage his honour for his future deed.

But impotent the sternest-made decree
 To win back love that once has ta'en its flight ;
 And once the soul immersed in Evil's sea,
 For its own sake holds evil in delight ;
 So that the suit to remedy her ill
 Only accumulated greater still.

To feign submission, and to foster wreak ;
 To promise, with no purpose to fulfil ;
 To falsely swear with an unblushing cheek,
 And mentally reserve a bitter will,
 He felt no scruple. In those barbarous times
 Force, falsehood, cunning, screen'd the vilest crimes.

So hate intenser grew, that fed on shame
 At the cool glances of indignant peers ;
 But more his mother's railleries inflame
 The rancour that his venom'd spirit sears
 As he beholds his wife by all belov'd,
 And in that amity himself reprov'd.

At length he took the resolution fell
 To isolate her from all fond regard ;
 Forced her sequestered in a tower to dwell
 With a bleared crone, her servitress and ward —
 His mother's chosen instrument and tool,
 Instructed less to serve than strictly rule.

Bitter and mournful was the heavy time,
 Humiliation, contumely, despite ;
 But with a Christian fortitude sublime,
 From earthly gloom she look'd to heavenly light :
 In prayer and contemplation lost her woes,
 Nor in her prayers forgot her deadly foes.

" Oh ! let my lips no curses breathe !" she cried ;
 " And to thy teaching may my heart conform —
 Stifle within me all resentful pride,
 As thy bright presence tranquillised the storm !
 Didst thou not in thy dying agonies
 Petition mercy for thine enemies ?

“Teach me the way to quell their fiercest hate,
 By practice of thy sweet example given,
 And lose regret of my poor earthly state
 By fitting me for the delights of heaven.
 Soon shall this mould of flesh be dust of earth ;
 Then may my soul partake of heavenly birth.”

Embittered and impatient of delay,
 Where meekness foil'd what cruelty devised,
 Avidious spite no longer could allay
 The ruthless yearnings it so ill disguised :
 Bertulfe resolved her death, but masked th' intent
 By feigning a deportment penitent.

He sought her lonely tower at close of eve—
 Smiles on his lips, but in his heart a hell ;
 A pseudo-suppliant mimicking to grieve,
 While nursing in his breast a project fell.
 Resting beside her on the only seat,
 He pleaded with the fashion of deceit.

“My grief, as my remorse, is heavy grown,
 That some malignant demon's evil power
 The weeds of rank discordance should have sown.
 To choke the blooming of love's gentle flower.
 What bonds of icy steel have girt my soul,
 And chill'd and harden'd me with their control?”

“No longer in myself myself I see,
 But clearer now than e'er thy virtues view,
 And urge for pardon of my fault the plea
 Of juster value and regard of you :
 You shall resume your state in bower and hall,
 And all the past respect and love recall.”

He paused a moment, seeking to compose
 His visage to a 'suasive, winning air,
 And find the fittest words to aptly glose
 The fiendish perfidy was lurking there ;
 And oft the subtle art that evil lends
 Fair semblance with the foulest impulse blends.

“A saint-like dame, by holy zeal inspired,
 With fervent arguments compunctions woke.
 She seemed with some celestial spirit fired,
 And by her voice I felt that heaven spoke.
 Council with thee she doth desire, to prove
 Thy friend, as mine, in reconciling love.

“By age and reverend maladies enchained,
 Her body's frailty to her mind gives power,
 As though her eve of life the light retained,
 To cast a radiance on its parting hour.
 As thee she cannot seek, I prithee deign
 To visit her, but for our mutual gain.

“Lambert and Hacca, as thy guides and guard,
 Have my direction to escort the way ;
 And that suspicious doubt thou may'st discard,
 I come to warn thee that at close of day
 They'll come to lead thee to the saintly cell
 Where the heaven-gifted monitress doth dwell.”

“ I am in the hands of heaven, as ductile clay ;
 In his decrees entirely I confide ;
 What you command I'm ready to obey
 If, in the doing so, nought shall betide
 My conscience and my faith can disapprove,
 Or contravene the laws of him above.”

Bertulfe then left her, with well-feigned respect,
 Mounted his horse, and rode to Bruges in speed :
 By absence hoping none might e'er suspect
 Participation in the murderous deed
 He had prescribed, but which he could not bear
 In guilty nervousness to linger near.

The sunless eve had grown to starless night,
 And mournful, wailing breathings swept the waste,
 Like emanations wrung from anguish'd sprite,
 That by tormenting fiends was fiercely chas'd.
 When near approach'd the dreary midnight hour,
 Lambert repair'd unto the lonely tower.

“ Mistress,” he said, in hoarse but low-breath'd tone,
 “ I come my master's bidding to fulfil.”
 “ I'm ready,” she replied ; “ let us begone,
 Since such has been my lord's desire and will.”
 Then mentally for heaven's protection pray'd,
 Sign'd him to lead, and silently obey'd.

He led her forth by a low postern gate,
 Where Hacca, pacing restless to and fro,
 Their coming seemed impatiently to wait.
 But little difference yet did either show,
 And she in thought was too intent to heed
 The manner or the men as they proceed.

In dogged silence sullenly they led,
 She meekly following in reverie ;
 Through broken ways by pools, and marshes fed,
 Congenial spots for guilt and knavery ;
 Now skirting a lone thicket's tangled side,
 Where solitude and darkness grimly vied.

The pathway, by a sudden turning, bent
 Into a thicket, lonelier than the waste,
 To where the waters of a spring found vent.
 When round her slender neck a noose was cast,
 The running cord they drew compress'd and tight
 Tugging and straining with their brutal might.

Hopeless of help, and powerless to resist,
 Folding her arms across her fluttering heart,
 She strove not with each fell antagonist :

Calmly accepting the pure martyr's part,
 Throeless she sank, and quickly passed away,
 Seeming for him and them to mutely pray.

A shudder shook the woeful lonely wood,
 And the retreating echo faintly flew ;
 In grim inertia the murderer's stood,
 Still the relax'd lanier clinging to,
 Their mouths agalp, and eyeballs rolling wild,
 Yet to their ghastly task unreconciled.

But ruffian shame o'er pity's painful touch
 Assumed the mastery by slow degrees ;
 They raised the body with polluting clutch ;
 They bore it through the rustling, pliant trees,
 To the dark pool made by the bubbling spring,
 Edged in by rushes' melancholy ring.

Unlacing from her neck the tightened thong,
 The clos'd eyes unsealed, and seemed to stare
 In a fixed, stone-like menace, to prolong
 Warning of future horror and despair.
 To them those eyes emitted ghostly light,
 That chilled and shook them with a wild affright.

"Quick ! plunge her in the spring !" grim Lambert cried ;
 But still did Hacca motionless remain,
 Voiceless, and deaf, and blind to all beside
 Those eyes which fixed him in their deathless strain ;
 So Lambert by himself, as best he could,
 O'erhead immersed her in the boiling flood.

Wiping his brow, he cried : "Woe worth the night
 On which the piteous stars do shame to look ;
 And may the malison of heaven light
 Upon the tongue that this foul deed bespoke.
 As man, while men I slew, I knew no faint ;
 But to slay woman ! woman !—no ; a saint.

"But his, not ours, the soul in hell shall burn ;
 Slaves of his will, by mighty order press'd,
 Scruple or question, 'gainst ourselves would turn,
 No option but to act his dark behest !"

"Not ours ! not ours !" groaned Hacca. "Well, I trow
 'That mine will burn ; I feel it burning now !"

When long time in the pool the head had lain,
 Tremblingly they completed their fell work :
 No doubt of death their thoughts could entertain ;
 So to the Chateau, through the nightly mirk,
 Jointly they bore the martyr cold and dead,
 And calmly laid her in her prison bed.

The sun had climbed high in the eastern sky,
 When like a train of fire the tidings spread,
 Bruiting the dire nocturnal tragedy
 That Godelive, self-strangled, was found dead.
 Bertulfe yet absent, Lambert mounted steed
 To warn him of the ill-accomplished deed.

Surprised and startled, some ran to and fro ;
 And some, with horror stricken, mutely stood.
 There was some feigned, but much of real, woe ;
 For many loved, and all had known her good.
 But Hacca's sorrow took the wildest mien,
 With moody mutterings and strange words between.

With ill-dissembled pain, the mask of grief
 On the old Chatelaine transparent showed
 The features of the fiendish fell relief,
 And triumph in her soul that fiercely glowed :
 Her orders all with cold precision traced
 The victim coffin'd in scarce decent haste.

But mark the sign of wrath in angry heaven !
 Bertulfe arriv'd in wild but false dismay.
 His Godelive must view ; the word is given,
 The coffin lid is slowly drawn away ;
 And as he gazes the dead eyes uncloze,
 And mock his mimic grief and acted woes.

And round her naked throat the lanier's mark
 Grows crimson red, and oozes forth blood stain ;
 While as he viewed he grew fear-blanch'd and stark,
 More death-like far than she whom he had slain ;
 And as he stood transfixed with guilt and fear,
 A peal of maniac laughter rose anear ;

And Hacca, wild in frenzy, laid his hand
 Upon the shoulder of his shrinking lord :
 " This deed of hell was done at thy command,
 And hell a fit requital shall afford ;
 That damning glance shall never quit thy sight,
 And in thy soul a quenchless flame shall light.

" Seest thou the bloody stain defile the snow
 Of that pure throat, and trickle on that breast ?
 So round thy heart a serpent's fiery glow
 Shall burn, and gnaw, and never give thee rest ;
 And may my curses fan the quenchless flame,
 And the earth quail at mention of thy name !

" Pale father-priest, turn from me thy bright eye
 Wherein I read a murderer's certain pain ;
 Hopeless perdition, endless agony ;
 I fear, I feel, all chance of pardon vain ;
 For here, already, brain and breast within
 The fiery tortures of the damned begin."

In frenzy raving he was borne away,
 And in convulsions miserably died ;
 And Lambert never, from that fatal day,
 Was seen nor heard of on that country side.
 Death quickly took the old Chatelaine's soul.
 And Bertulfe donn'd the tonsor and the cowl.

Around the fatal spring a convent rose
 Endow'd by wealth of Bertulfe of Ghisteltes ;
 Its waters wondrous healing powers enclosed,
 And it was called Saint Godelive's Holy Well :
 Its chiefest virtues, as the legends quote,
 Were cures of all diseases of the throat.

Eight days from each sixth of the fair July
 Pilgrims and patients, in a pious train,
 To saintly Godelive's Well wend piously
 To pray and seek relief from sickly pain :
 The pure and painful memory to revive
 Of Ghisteltes' patron, sweet Saint Godelive.

SONG OF PROGRESS.

WHAT ! shall the future of man
 Be likened to the past,
 And disregard of human rights
 Continue to the last ?
 Shall power, ambition, and deceit
 Still warp, and crush, and bind
 The mind, and body, dark'ning still
 The future of mankind ?

Shall Ignorance in fetters dire
 The masses still enslave,
 And Bigotry in bitter ire,
 Its dreary dogmas rave ?
 Shall wealth and wretchedness for aye
 Their glaring contrast find,
 And crime and creeds be rife through a
 The future of mankind ?

Shall Toil produce, but ne'er partake—
 Complain, but yet endure ?
 Is there no physic for the ill,
 No remedy to cure ?
 Yes, there's a problem might be solved
 Freedom's amount to find,
 For in the present is involved
 The future of mankind.

The task to learn, the part to take,
 The duty to discharge,
 The obstacle to overthrow,
 Advantage to enlarge :
 Justice and Truth the cynosure
 To guide the ardent mind ;
 The present earnest helper works
 The future of mankind.

THE DRAMA AND THE STAGE.

SHE whom I sing hath not the spring-like bloom
 Of youth and fresh-blown beauty to allure.
 She hath lived many years : knew I the sum,
 And should I venture to declare it here,
 And after to extol her loveliness,
 What most should I inspire—pity or scorn ?
 Yet so it is ; spite of her antique birth,
 There seems a deathless and unfading power
 To fence her from decay ; and year by year
 Some novel charm doth lend a new delight,
 Enhancing by some combination fresh
 Her yet unmade-up glory. Ne'ertheless,
 She has passed through vicissitude's assay.
 Injustice's hand and foul Detraction's tongue
 Have pressed her hard, and sought to slime her fame.
 Neglect's cold shadow she hath wandered in,
 But to emerge with a new-gathered bloom.
 What that is beautiful can hope to 'scape
 The rivalry unscrupulous of means
 By which factitious triumph is attained ?
 How in the ebb and flow of fantasy
 Can what is best avoid, or rule the fate
 To which a modish fickleness condemns ?
 The wave, capricious, floats some trivial toy
 Onto the strand of favour, and sweeps off
 The pearl into oblivion ; but at length
 The gem enriched by time's bright chemistry,
 Un-oozed by some quick-sighted connoisseur,
 Takes rank amongst the jewels of a crown.
 She hath known the height of opulence ;
 She hath sipped the bitter cup of exile ;
 She hath discoursed to kings and sages, mute
 Before the enthrallment of her eloquence ;
 She hath descended to the rustic's shed,
 Adapting to his humble thoughts her own.

Whether the mood was to be grave or gay,
 Tender or humorous, astute or dull,
 Quaint or sublime, witty or passion-wrought,
 Hers was the universal art that knew
 Each ward within the human heart, and held
 The key that could unlock it.

Not alone
 Hath her grand presence graced one land,
 But every State hath her adoption given,
 Where barbarism's night hath yielded to
 The civilising sun, where favouring arts
 Have swept primeval crudities away,
 And the soft, social impulse of mankind
 Hath raised the city, temple, or the shrine.
 Among all nations hath she made her home ;
 In every language in some manner found
 Ut'rance and hold, a welcome and a sway !
 For she is that for which a yearning lurks
 Deep in the heart of broad humanity ;
 Where human passions and affections see
 The springs of their own actions set awork,
 And all that's good, and grand, and soft, and pure,
 Shines out against the shadowy contrast made
 By counteracting violence and stealth ;
 Where the pent sense of many-phasèd mirth
 Sees imaged those best-loved remembrances
 Of what exists, unknown, within itself.
 Hers is the art, giving a double sight,
 To witness outwardly and look within,
 Finding one's self in what she simulates.
 Her plastic nature can assume the grace
 Of goddess-like enchantment, and each form
 That graduates towards deformity.
 The priesthood (although now condemning her)
 Have held her fitted for their holy work ;
 Albeit, in sacerdotal trappings clad,
 She moved ungainly, having in herself
 Too much of nature's warmth to freely move
 In the strait vesture of a binding tire ;
 And when she dared to show the acts of men,
 They held her hostile to their heavenly craft.
 Could her free nature have been bounded for
 Their ends alone, she would be holy deemed.

If not the poet's own, from early youth
 He hath adopted her as one endowed
 With gifted utterance, a force to lend
 To the embattled ranks of fervent thoughts
 Which warred, and war against the dark and dull.

Music hath lent its full enhancing power,
 And painting its illusive tinted charm,

To aid her rousing force or soothing spell ;
 And the well-suited trio aptly blend,
 Their separate delights appearing one,
 And, each by each, highly intensified,
 Perfecting with fine fraud to cheat the sense
 Of straitened space, or uncongenial show
 Of elements might mar the mental feast.
 Graceful agility, by nature linked
 To scientific rule, and called the *dance*,
 Makes of itself a loyal adjunct too,
 To beautify and animate the scene.
 All that apart are held as things of charm,
 And fostered as the world's embellishments,
 United, scarce can lose their character.

'*Tis on the stage*, in all her perfect trim,
 I sing her praise, not in her lethargy.
 Untimely buried (though she be not dead)
 In seldom-opened volume, and, if read,
 With but one heart and brain to beat and burn
 (Can they be moved) to its enkindling fire.
 But where the poet and the player join
 With all art-helps that can be lent to them,
 And the impressionable hundreds hang,
 Eager and breathless, on the embodied theme,
 Many humanities merged into one—
 One thought, one sympathy, one happiness :
 The Drama and the Stage may then be called
 A Priestess and a Temple, and the Faith
 Of the thronged auditory gathered there
 The love of Virtue, the contempt of Vice

DOWN IN THE DUMPS.

Down in the dumps ! Why, zounds, my friend,
 I little thought to find you so ;
 Can I my prompt assistance lend ?
 Has fortune frown'd ? Does cash run low ?
 Has death call'd home one well-beloved ?
 Has blight or murrin, fire or flood,
 Been busy, and so mighty proved,
 To leave you in this woeful mood,
 Down in the dumps ?

Down in the dumps for nought but love !
 I never heard such stuff before !
 If twenty jades cold-hearted prove,
 The world holds twenty thousand more.
 And when the right comes to your turn,
 You'll bless your stars that this did frown :
 To prize her smiles by this you'll learn :
 Then keep your heart up ; don't sink down,
 Down in the dumps.

BELATED.

THE mists hang thick o'er the swampy moor,
 And the sough of the wind is dreary and dull ;
 And the path, at this late nocturnal hour,
 Is sore to find, and with danger full ;
 And I stumble o'er broken, tufty ground,
 And start from the sedgey-margined pool ;
 But not a guiding glimmer is found
 O'er the wide expanse of the moorland cool.
 What's that standing out in the thick'ning gloom ?
 I fear to advance, and I dread to retreat ;
 For it seems every footstep more weirdly to loom,
 And my vision more spectral each instant to greet.
 And that cry so inhuman ! Oh what can it be ?
 And what is it stretching its arms in the air,
 As though barring the passage in anger to me,
 Or seeming to sign I am trespassing there ?

Pshaw ! 'tis but a ricketty old finger-post,
 Standing phantom-like close by the cross-road side ;
 But, instead of its being a gibbering ghost,
 It may prove to be rather a goodlier guide.
 And that scream was only the owlet's cry,
 On its flight o'er the lightless, dismal waste,
 Saluting the straggler courteously
 As it whirls around, or flits by in haste.
 And I stand beneath that wooden deceit,
 Whose mocking hands point two different ways ;
 But which is the right one I gladly would weet.
 'Tis no guide in the night, whatever by day :
 On its profile black no inscription shows
 In the blank obscure of the rayless night.
 Of the road to the place I'd be going to
 I've a choice, and a chance of not choosing the right.

I think I have heard that all roads lead to Rome ;
 And I have no doubt that, if closely applied,
 The same line of argument well would come home
 To any place where you'd walk to or ride.
 But that roundabout doctrine I think hardly fair ;
 For I have, I own, an objection the strongest,
 Of the roads that are leading to everywhere,
 To think I'm choosing the loneliest and longest.
 Now, where a man's temper and patience are troubled,
 As a rule he's not given to moralise much ;
 Yet I cannot abstain, although plaguely hobbled,
 Awhile to contemplate the doubtings of such
 Who morally grope in the ignorant gloaming
 Of the many-forked roads of opinion to choose,
 And fearful they further astray may be roaming,
 By the haphazard choice of promiscuous views.
 For the ways of the world are as doubtful and vague
 To the untutored plodder, benighted in mind,
 Indecision, and doubt, and misgiving, the plague
 Attending each footstep he's certain to find.
 And my present dilemma suggests to my thought
 That authority certainly well should take care
 To attend to the lighting of ways as they ought,
 And to keep all their guide-posts in proper repair.

SONG.

OH for the power to love thee dearer !
 If dearer love than mine could be :
 Some mystic spell to draw thee nearer—
 In heart, in soul, in sense—to me.
 What though love's a vain employment,
 That in hopeless rapture steepes
 The aching soul in wild enjoyment,
 Welling from its poisoned deeps ?

I would love thee more intensely,
 Yet meet thy gaze, and loveless seem ;
 Love thee boundlessly, immensely,
 Yet freeze beneath thy glance's beam.
 Never know it ! never know it !
 From my voice-tone, face-expression,
 Consume before thee, yet ne'er show it :
 Thou'rt another's fond possession.

Think the past is all a day-dream ;
 I'll not court thy scorn nor pity :
 Thy path's along a sun-lit life-stream—
 Mine through a crumbling desert city.
 Yet smile nor dream how wild the passion
 That burns unseen within my breast :
 I love thee not in worldly fashion ;
 And but to love—is to be bless'd.

CHRISTMAS IS COMING.

CHRISTMAS is coming, and will soon be here,
 When high feasts will be held in regal halls,
 And royal boards will groan with regal cheer,
 And mirth vibrate along the bannered walls ;
 When *Fubilates*, through cathedral aisles,
 In deep-entoned cadences shall roll,
 And songs, and carols, dances, smiles,
 Tell of cheer'd body and of gladden'd soul.
 On the Redeemer's feast—
 The meekest and the best
 E'er to the earth was given—
 The immortal heir of heaven.

Christmas is coming, and will soon be here,
 When landed lords their noble guests invite
 To those reunions whose close ties endear,
 And give to social intercourse delight.
 Sumptuously deck'd in jewell'd radiance bright,
 Beauty will thread the dance in graceful pride,
 Joy flashing from her eyes in beaming light,
 High-blooded manhood ambling at her side.
 For 'tis of all the year
 The festival most dear,
 When Pleasure holds high court
 For mirth and graceful sport.

Christmas is coming, and will soon be here,
 When in the merchant's snug suburban home
 There will be heard the ring of laughter clear
 Of kin far-gathered 'neath the elders' dome.
 The drum of dancing feet will boom the air,
 Hilarious music beat the measured time,
 Glass tintinabulate and lustres glare,
 And jingling sounds make up a merry chime.
 'Tis the year's holiday ;
 Canker'd Care stands at bay ;
 Elder, matron, and child
 Join in revilry wild.

Christmas is coming, and will soon be here,
 When yeoman, tradesman, clerk, mechanic, hind,
 Draw closer those sweet bindings that endear
 And fuse in love the souls of human kind.
 And though remote such gatherings may be,
 The rarity may give a keener zest,
 And leave a joymark in the memory,
 Noting the period when they were blessed.
 Even the prison cell
 Its Christmas tale can tell,
 Of supplemental cheer
 To penal rigours drear.

Christmas is coming, and will soon be here.
 'To some not Christmas of the jovial mien,
 But frozen, empty-handed, haggard, blear,
 And hollow-cheeked, with eyes where death is seen ;
 The Christmas of the needy, suffering poor,
 Fireless and breadless, sickly and ill-clad ;
 Outworn with struggle, which can strive no more,
 Reduced to woe unutterably sad.
 When generous hearts rejoice
 Let not affliction's voice
 Vainly for aid implore,
 But *hear* and *help* the poor.

HOME OF MY BIRTH.

SONG—*Set to Music.*

ON the skirts of the forest, all shadow'd in green,
 A neat, straw-thatched, and ivy-clad cot may be seen ;
 Round its porch the sweet jess'mine and roses entwine,
 And their blossoms and odours together combine.
 There the wood pigeon's note and the blackbird's rich song
 Through the bright summer weather are heard the day long ;
 There the squirrel doth climb 'mid the crisp-beechen boughs,
 And the throstle and linnet sweet echoes arouse.
 To me that sweet spot is the dearest on earth ;
 'Tis my childhood's loved home, the dear cot of my birth.

There the lesson was learned that to life was the guide,
 Of honesty's wisdom, the folly of pride ;
 Of well-tempered contentment the profit and use,
 And the dangers arising from passions' abuse ;
 That the lures of false pleasure and vanity may
 Delude for a season, but ever betray ;

But truth and sincerity ever abide,
 Man's unfailing helpers throughout the world wide.
 Yes ; the counsels that govern our conduct on earth
 Must early be learned in the home of our birth.

I have sailed round the world, many lands have I known,
 In the regions of ice and the fierce scorching zone ;
 Where the wonders and grandeur of nature abound,
 And the marvels of human construction are found ;
 Where wealth hath all empire, and luxury's sway
 Makes a pageant of life in its gorgeous display.
 But their contrast and novelty only had power
 To cause me to yearn for this shelter the more ;
 For memories fond of affection and worth
 Cling ever around the dear cot of my birth.

THE PEACEFUL HERO.

A BRAVE COASTGUARDSMAN.

To the Editor of the "Daily Telegraph."

SIR,—On Monday last (Dec. 28th, 18⁸⁵) a storm raged with fearful violence on this coast, causing the utter loss of two fine barques, one English and one Austrian. They came on shore at Westward Ho ! Bideford Bay, almost at the same time. The lifeboat was launched and manned by volunteers from the Coastguard and sailors from Appledore. It battled its way bravely to the Austrian vessel, and took off seven of the foreigners in safety. Distinguished among its intrepid crew was David Johns, a commissioned boatman of the Coastguard, and one who on many occasions had saved life at sea at the imminent peril of his own. As usual, he was foremost at the post of danger, and while engaged in rescuing men from the wreck, was washed overboard with a comrade, to whose support he swam immediately. Both were picked up by the lifeboat. Directly on landing he flew to the assistance of the other barque, now connected with the land by a hawser, the crew of which was still on board, and volunteered to go off and show them how to use the cradle, rigged up to pass them on shore. He got on board, and was assisting a man into the cradle when a huge wave struck the barque, causing her to heel suddenly over. Johns, wearied out by his exertions, lost his hold, dropped into the sea, and though a strong swimmer, was never seen again. He bore the highest character for gallant and steady conduct. He was a kind husband and father, and has left a young widow and four children. I now venture to appeal in their behalf to a sympathising and generous public, to mark its admiration of this heroic sailor. Any contributions for their relief may be sent to the West of England and South Wales District Bank, Bideford ; or to your obedient servant,

F. J. S. HUTCHINSON, Lieut.-Colonel.

Westward Ho ! Bideford Bay, North Devon, Dec. 29th.

To the Editor of the "Daily Telegraph."

SIR,—Having been eye-witnesses of the conduct of the Coastguardsman Johns, who met death while discharging his duty—generously interpreting that duty to include every exertion and every risk which had for its object the saving of life—we venture to join in the appeal which Lieut.-Colonel Hutchinson has made for the widow and children, in the hour of that bitterness which must remain as the household portion of some hearts whenever the story of self-sacrifice is told.—Your obedient servants,

EVELINE PORTSMOUTH ; AUBERON HERBERT.

Eggsford, North Devon, Dec. 30th.

SHALL no tribute mark the merit
Of the peaceful hero's bearing ;
Of the ruthless, selfless spirit
That inspires his gen'rous daring ?
To front the danger-freighted wave
In its dread wrath and mad career,
To seize the oar or helm to save,
As Mercy's eager volunteer !

Beside the battle-roll of bravour
A fairer record should unfold,
Of holier mien and softer favour
Than the red catalogue can hold ;
Of the devoted, dauntless band,
So self-forgetting, void of fears,
Who on the billows and on land
Stand forth as Mercy's volunteers.

Among the list let me remember
One whose bereaved widow moans,
The twenty-eight of stern December,
The brave, undaunted David Johns,
The Coastguardsman of Appledore,
Who met his death, though life so dear,
Upon the North Devonian shore,
As Mercy's active volunteer.

An Austrian and a British barque
Were driven on shore at Westward Ho :
The life-boat's crew of Coastguards mark
The sore distress, and battle through
The stormy deep, and promptly save
Seven Austrians from their awful doom,
In course of which a mighty wave
Swept two life-savers in the foam.

Poor David and a fellow rower
Whelmed in the seething waters' roll ;
His comrade seemed to lack the power
To breast the mighty flood's control ;
But David's sturdy arm soon bore
His fainting friend towards the boat
And safely to the welcome shore
The rescued crew securely float.

Scarce landed were the foreign band
 Than to the English barque he steers,
 Which by a hawser from the land
 Was reached and rigged with saving gears;
 The which to work he climbed the wreck,
 The cradle slung, and reeved the rope,
 When a huge billow heaved the deck,
 And swept him 'yond all help or hope.

Awhile he clung with mortal hold;
 But, spent with zealous over-toil,
 His wearied grasp relaxed its fold,
 And he became the ocean's foil.
 He, the strong swimmer, sank from sight,
 Sucked under the remorseless tide,
 Beyond the reach of human might:
 'Twas thus the noble helper died.

Oft had his power of work and will
 Been given at peril, life to save.
 His private worth and praises fill
 The list'ner's ear—"As kind as brave!"
 Four helpless children live to weep,
 With his young wife, his mournful fate.
 Oh, Charity! some memory keep,
 And help the helper's stricken mate.

LAURA'S FIRST BIRTHDAY.

Love's a diamond, many-sided—
 On each face a glory new;
 Prism'd beauty, subdivided,
 Into many a varied hue.
 Pale or brilliant, love discerneth
 In its jewel an aurora,
 Tints to soothe, and spark that burneth:
 Such variety's in Laura.

Love's a garden, and the flower
 You have sown the rarest charm;
 Flaunting in its dazzling power,
 Or blushing in its simple calm.

'Tis the eye of love declareth
 Wherefore you are its adorer ;
 And Nature's argument prepareth
 A nook of love to shelter Laura.

Love's a mystic, strange magician,
 From its "vasty deep" can call
 Spirits of a mighty missions,
 Spells that hold a potent thrall ;
 Prophetess of happy auger,
 Showing promised hope before her ;
 And I grasp the omen—mauger
 All mistrust, and hope for Laura.

I with no legacy of splendour,
 Station or riches, may endow her ;
 But may all goodly nature lend her
 Those benisons of higher power,
 As virtue, sense, good temper's garnish
 Of attributes presiding o'er her,
 Beyond factitious worldly varnish,
 To guide and guard my darling Laura.

SONG .

DID you e'er ask a maiden to give you a kiss,
 Who, pouting and frowning, said, "Prythee, give o'er,
 For, if you do not, I shall take it amiss."
 Ah ! that is the signal to press it the more ;
 For the contrary rule is the game she does play,
 And her sweet pretty face in false colours she'll dress ;
 But she'll think you a fool if you hasten away,
 For while she says "No," all the time she means "Yes."

Did you e'er ask a pretty girl with you to wed,
 Whose soft bosom heaved with a timid delight,
 And, blushing in modesty, hung down her head.
 And silent remained in embarrassment quite.
 That consent is in silence, all willingly own ;
 Then why need the lover his suit further press ?
 The maid has already her willingness shown ;
 For though she said nothing, of course she meant "Yes."

BABY IS BORN.

Another hope, another fear,
 Another strong incentive given ;
 Another nodule to endear,
 And temper life with loving leaven.
 A counterpoise to being's weight,
 In life's uneven balance thrown—
 A new-born charge that doth create
 A strength of love before unknown.

Another tiny taper lit
 At the perpetual heavenly blaze,
 Whose feeble beams but faintly flit
 Thorough existence' morning haze ;
 Yet welcome as the distant ray
 Of the long-looked-for Pharos bright—
 A spark of hope, a guide, a stay,
 Growing and bright'ning in the night.

Another tender, budding flower
 Hath sprung up in the smiling morn,
 With purity and beauty's dower
 Affection's garden to adorn.
 Oh ! may this wee and hopeful prize
 Escape all blight, and flourish fair,
 Watched by my heedful, anxious eyes,
 And 'tended by my fondest care !

Another sweet and purling spring
 Hath leapt from its long-hidden source,
 And rippling through my heart doth sing,
 And rush with fresh and quick'ning force.
 Its cheering murmurs thrill, and melt,
 And sooth, and soften, and caress,
 A sweet emotion, newly-felt,
 Delicious in its novelty.

Another lien with the world ;
 Another covenant with life ;
 Another mottoed flag unfurled ;
 Another spur to honoured strife ;
 Another motive to endure ;
 Another premium to incite ;
 Another angel to allure ;
 Another joy where all unite.

THE CLERK'S STORY.

“WHITHER away, so sad, Sir Clerk ;
 Whither away, so sad ?
 Thou bearest that perturbèd sign
 That ill assorts with years like thine—
 More fit to blend with age like mine.
 What trouble dims thy glance's spark ?
 What solace can I add ?”

“Father, pass on : thy reverend mien
 Might well invite reply ;
 But that which causes my unrest
 May not be trusted to thy breast ;
 Nor may the causes be confessed
 That my deep trouble's source have been—
 My helpless misery.”

“Thou errest, son : for every ill
 There's sure some remedy.
 Time is a leech of mighty power,
 That in the most unlooked-for hour
 Oft balms the wounded spirit o'er.
 If strengthened by submissive will,
 You bide his ministry.”

“Oh, father ! vain the hope you'd teach !
 Well wot I 'tis the part
 Of who feels not Despair's sharp throe
 To counsel calm to hopeless woe,
 To soothe the pangs they do not know,
 And patient resignation preach
 To those who feel the smart.”

“Few, son, whose years count long as mine
 But some deep grief have known.
 Of Sorrow's burden I have borne
 The weight, and many a year, forlorn,
 Have felt the goad of Grief's sharp thorn—
 Haply, with sufferings great as thine,
 Endured, if not outgrown.”

“Sit here, for the tall way-side rock
 Shields from the noontide ray.
 Give me thy trust, for fain am I
 Some consolation's help to try,
 That may assuage the poignancy
 Of thy young hope's too sudden shock,
 And solace as I may.”

“ Three causes most make man’s distress—
 Ambition, wealth, and love.
 To eld doth haunting avarice cling,
 The lust of worldly honours sting
 ’Mid life’s aspirant trafficking ;
 But youth recks for these luring less—
 Him love’s sharp torments prove.”

“ Nay, father, love no torment is
 When ’tis returned like mine ;
 But, by the cruel, cursed allies
 Thou namest, two fair destinies,
 Formed for affection’s harmonies,
 Remorselessly are wrenched from bliss,
 And doomed to endless time.

“ For we by them the loss approve
 Of all that makes life dear—
 Love, hope, content—the mighty stake
 That life, a bliss or bane, can make ;
 The bonds of mutual rapture break ;
 And two hearts grown to one in love
 Asunder wrenched for e’er.

“ Oh ! listen, father, to my grief !
 For now my heart flows o’er,
 And in the wild surcharge of dole,
 Beyond my power to control,
 Seeks to relieve my aching soul,
 Which yearns for even faint relief
 From Fate’s remorseless power.

“ From infant days our home was one ;
 For, orphaned even then,
 I to her father’s care was ta’en—
 A trust from sire in battle slain
 To friend and comrade in the train,
 Of him who latest filled the throne—
 The best of kings and men.

“ For war’s unequal fate had made
 One rich, the other poor ;
 And, peace restored, Sir Bertram’s name
 Denoted wealth, no less than fame ;
 And lust of State and grandeur came,
 And lavish life and high parade
 Grew on him more and more.

“ Meanwhile myself and Eveline,
 His only infant fair,
 As brother and as sister grew,
 Joint scholars—loving playmates too ;
 Nor shade of different nurture knew ;
 And surely, father, ne’er were seen
 Fonder nor happier pair.

“ Sir Bertram, faithful to his trust,
 When freed from courtly thrall,
 With pleasure seemed to mark the growth
 Of deep’ning love between us both ;
 To our affections nothing loth ;
 And viewed with frank, approving gust—
 Which seemed to sanction all.

“ But childish love, as time flew by,
 To warmer passion turned :
 The girl to lovely woman grew—
 The boy to man ; and each to view
 The other with a feeling new :
 A fresh and sweeter ecstasy
 Within our bosoms burned.

“ Our hearts were pure, and free from guile ;
 We dreamed no let nor ill.
 The soft enchantment left no choice,
 But spoke in touch and glance and voice,
 Confessed in raptures that rejoice
 Me with their memory even while
 Anguish my heartstrings thrill.

“ But ruin on Sir Bertram came :
 His wealth was swept away ;
 Title and fame alone remained.
 Thriftless Profusion’s course had drained
 His fortunes, with fair honour gained.
 To usurers’ relentless claim
 He fell a helpless prey.

“ But great and sore as Fortune’s change,
 ’Twas nothing to his own !
 A bitter greed his soul possessed,
 That gave no truce nor granted rest,
 Cursing his spirit with a pest,
 Working a transformation strange,
 Like spell upon him thrown.

“ Hard and morose in mien and word,
 Suspicious and severe,
 With dogged, foul perversity,
 Regarding each with jealous eye,
 Like to a secret enemy,
 As though some malign spirit stirred
 Inspiring doubt or fear.

“ But I, alas ! far more than all,
 His mark of rancour was :
 My presence fanned some latent fire
 Of undeserved, unceasing ire,
 That foiled all study or desire,
 By guarded effort to forestall,
 And banish every cause.

“ A burden to his straitened state,
 I felt myself heart-sore.
 But, Oh ! my love was most my crime !
 The love approved in former time
 Was now my fault, my blemish prime ;
 And my condition desperate
 Grew daily more and more.

“ My studies stood me now in stead :
 By absence to appease,
 I craved permission to essay
 For means of life to seek some way,
 For I'd approved for many a day
 How bitter was dependent bread—
 How blameful, sloth, and ease.

“ His eager, quick consent ensued—
 A look of meaning keen.
 My heart turned sick, and faint, and sore ;
 I felt some fate impending o'er
 My clouded hopes, so bright before.
 That moment I in foresight viewed
 What since hath real been.

“ I saw fair Eveline turn pale ;
 I read her speaking eye ;
 I felt one chord of doubt and dread
 Through both our prescient bosoms fled
 Of some dire trammel to be spread,
 That would immerse us in *le-maille*
 To love's perplexity.

“ But his cold knife-like, watchful glance
 Held us both palely mute :
 No chance had we to breathe our thought,
 To soothe the pangs that parting taught,
 Nor speak of hopes—we vainly sought,
 In time, in constancy, or chance,
 And grief make less acute.

“ Alone we pondered on our strait.
 Sir Bertram's watchful guard
 Was unrelaxed, till came the day
 Which brought the bitter time to say
 A sad adieu, and haste away,
 In doleful absence to debate
 Our fate so sore and hard.

“ By chance, with one who learning prized
 Congenial suit I found ;
 In clerkiy tasks absorbed, I strove
 To stifle thoughts of hopeless love,
 Which could but constant torment prove.
 Regrets, by labour exorcised
 Gave respite to my wound.

“ But soon there ran a rumour by
 Of a vile barter planned :
 A man of wealth, but lineage mean ;
 Old, but for high alliance keen,
 Had fixed his glance on Eveline,
 And, with Sir Bertram’s poverty,
 Had merchandised her hand.

‘ The covenant of infamy,
 ’Twas said, was signed and sealed :
 For a plebeian dotard’s gold
 Avarice a wretched daughter sold.
 Oh ! can the impious tale be told
 To verdant earth and smiling sky,
 And heaven’s wrath yet unpealed !

“ In desp’rate haste by night and day,
 Not knowing why, I sped
 To seek out Eveline, to plead
 Against the black, unrighteous deed.
 But, Oh ! what hope I should succeed !
 I knew hers, by my own dismay,
 Could well be reckon’d.

“ I reached Sir Bertram’s shrunk domain.
 I sought my Eveline’s bower.
 I found her pale as corse on bier ;
 I heard her plaint ; I strove to cheer.
 She seemed to list, but not to hear.
 Anguish had stricken heart and brain,
 And paralysed their power.

“ I sought Sir Bertram, and my love
 Vented its deep appeal.
 My bootless plea he laughed to scorn,
 Reviled my need and love forlorn,
 And vowed that on this fatal morn,
 That Eveline, by all above,
 Should wed, spite woe or weal.

“ This morn ! this morn ! this fatal morn !
 The sacrifice is made !
 This morn from hence should stand accursed
 In all the calendar the worst.
 Oh ! if my labouring heart would burst !
 My grief’s too heavy to be borne,
 ‘ Too bitter to be stayed !’

“ Cease to blaspheme and cease to pine ;
 Thy griefs are ended, son.
 Did I not say that the High will
 Hath heavenly efficacy still
 To blunt the sting of human ill ?
 And, sooth to say, its grace Divine
 Hath remedied thine own.

“ E’en come I now from death-shrift straight
 Of one in bridal trim—
 Thy rival, who, by fall from horse,
 Now lies a pale and blood-stained corpse.
 Heaven’s judgment still hath weight and force :
 He kens the proper time to wait,
 If we but trust in him.

“ In Death’s dark hour repentance found
 The sinning man of old.
 His wealth to thee and Eveline,
 By will and covenant between
 Him and Sir Bertram, left has been,
 Thy fate to Eveline’s is bound.
 Sad son, my tale is told.”

THE CHILDREN’S SUMMER BALL.

I LOVE to see the children dance,
 I love to hear the children sing
 In artless, joyous nonchalance,
 Spinning in a wheeling ring.
 Intertwisted waists and arms,
 Guileless, innocency’s type ;
 Tiny *Chevaliers et dames*,
 To a Barb’ry organ’s pipe,

In some crowded quarter, where
 Music’s voice is seldom heard,
 Making then a gala rare
 In the stifled street and yard.
 Weary little cagelings feel
 The charm of the familiar chant
 That sets in motion heart and heel,
 Making the swart court jubilant.

Oh ! thou Italian, London’s bore,
 All pardoned be thy venial sin
 For striking up before my door
 Just as my “ forty winks ” begin.
 For my disturbed post-prandial rest,
 From my free heart thou art forgiven,
 That thou hast made these young ones blest ;
 For joy and mirth are childhood’s heaven.

A SONG.

OH ! thou whose charms have o'er my spirit
 A bless'd and sweet enchantment cast,
 May I this heavenly kindness merit,
 And pay it with affection vast !
 Riches nor titles can I offer ;
 In life I play no gilded part ;
 But with this hand to thee I proffer
 An honest, truthful, loving heart.

If that fond glance translates with trueness
 A free consent and love's return,
 There is more wealth in its clear blueness
 Than hoards for which your misers burn.
 For soul with soul thus freely greeting,
 Shake off from life its grosser parts ;
 It hath no joy to match the meeting
 Of two devoted, loving hearts.

ADDRESS.

*(Written and spoken at the benefit for the Patriotic Fund, on behalf
 of the Widows and Orphans of the Crimean Heroes, Dublin).*

NEED I solicit pardon that between
 The gaps of this, our fictitious mimic scene,
 I come in mournful earnest to appeal,
 Not for imaginary woes, but real ?
 No, for where common sympathies are felt,
 The forms of ceremonial customs melt ;
 And general consent does them unbind,
 And cast Convention's fetters to the wind.

I am here, then, by my errand made thus bold,
 To speak, and tell what should be said and told.
 Peace smiled, her halcyon slumbers were serene ;
 Joy watched her rest with eyes of laughing sheen ;
 Love with glad face looked in the eyes of Health ;
 And Plenty strewed her wisely-gathered wealth
 Where age, or want, or pain, held out the hand,
 Blessed, and bestowing blessings on the land.

But, Oh ! tranquillity too sweet to last !
 Through the hushed heavens the wild terrific blast,
 Pealing from War's dread clarion, rends
 The blessed calm, and the chilled life-blood sends
 Back to the heart of Pity. Nations rise
 On tiptoe wonder; and, with pained eyes,
 Mournfully gaze upon the battle plain.
 The wrecks of strife, the wounded and the slain ;
 Life battling with Death, Health with Disease,
 Patience with Fury, dismal sights are these !
 The fell Magician of the North, who caused
 This ghastly spectacle of strife, had paused,
 If in his despot heart one fibre beat
 Of ruth for human woe or virtue sweet ;
 But, bloated with his pride to rule o'er slaves,
 Blind in their ignorance, their felon glaives
 They would employ to stab fair Liberty,
 And stain her snowy breast with crimson dye.
 But o'er her hallowed presence Briton's sons
 Keep sleepless watch and ward, for kindred runs
 Her blood in every heart born in that land
 Where Freedom's banner holds its proudest stand.
 The echo of the first invasive tread
 Awoke their might, indomitably dread.
 Their fame-emblazoned flag streams side by side
 With martial Gaul's, and emulative pride
 Links France's palm, in England's sturdy grasp :
 What despot might can break that potent clasp ?
 But Oh, the grief ! To think a cause so just,
 So holy, in its vindication, must
 (As many erst have been as true, as good)
 Be purchased with the flow of martyr blood ;
 That hearts made tender by each British tie,
 With their last pulses guarding it must die ;
 Or, stricken down in helpless anguish, find
 A state—compared with which death were more kind—
 Where on the fevered vision forms arise
 Of wives and children, who, with streaming eyes
 And supplicating outstretched hands, implore
 That help and succour *they* can give no more ;
 Of parents left in feebleness and age,
 None near their need or sorrow to assuage ;
 None but that God whose missioned ravens fed
 The holy exile with his heaven sent bread :
 And the old country's heart of charity
 And gratitude to sons who freely die,
 Unwithered to preserve each leaf that now
 In honour wreathes her time-ennobled brow.
 And shall these legacies the patriot dead
 Bequeathed to us from Victory's gory bed,
 Be unregarded, when the safety flower
 Blooms from the thistle of that danger's hour ?

No ; in the shadow of protecting Peace
 Let their necessity and trouble cease ;
 We, in our gratitude and justice, bent
 To execute this holy testament.

MY DAUGHTER'S BIRTHDAY ODE.

(On attaining her first year, October 25th, 1868.)

THOU one wee charm, my joy, my pride,
 On whom my focus'd love is bent,
 Whose dawn of being's beautified
 With ways so sweet and innocent:
 One year this morn has reached its span,
 Thy young life's advanced pioneer,
 That forth into existence ran
 The unknown tract of time to peer.

Thou art the first to us, and this
 In annual count the first to thee.
 This day shall be assigned to bliss,
 And fond affection's revelry.
 First thou shalt be in place and dower,
 Queen of the day enthroned and crowned ;
 Young lady-paramount in power ;
 Empress within this bound.

Thy names, and e'en thy nicknames, bear
 This royal day more loving weight ;
 And " Charlie," " Dicks," or " Coonie dear "
 Are emphasised with deeper state.
 Exemptions from all check or let
 (Save for thy weal) to thee belong,
 And let no subject dare forget
 Our Baby-Queen " can do no wrong."

But let no vain hyperbole
 Live in my earnest closing strain :
 Thy guardian angel constant be
 Till this sweet day comes round again.
 Over and over, till the space
 Of a long happy life be passed ;
 Wreathed in love's and virtue's grace,
 Reflecting goodness, till the last !

LAMENT OF ARRAH-NA-POGUE.

OH ! sad is the bosom and note of the bird
 For her lost mate complaining alone on the tree ;
 But sadder and sorer my passion is stirr'd
 With bitterest dole that thou'st severed from me.

As the breeze to the sea, as the sun to the morn,
 As the star to the eve, as the moon to the night,
 Thou wert breath, warmth, and light to my being, till torn
 From my bosom; but now I am desolate quite.

Oh ! joy, art thou fretting ? Must sorrow abide ?
 Without thee, my own love, life's bitter and drear ;
 It were better to sleep in the grave by thy side
 Than, when thou hast left me, live sorrowing here.

THE PARKS OF LONDON.

Who gave the parks to us—to us,
 The city dwelling, weary-minded,
 Toil-harrass'd crowd, who gave us thus,
 Amid the dusky, smoke enwinded,
 Traffic-confused and pelf-pursuing,
 Disease engendering, vice imbuing,
 Populous desert stretched afar,
 The seat of ceaseless moral war ?
 Who gave these rallying grounds for health,
 Fenced in from Mammon's grasping stealth ;
 Where grass may spring, and foliage wave,
 In verdant clusters, sunny, dancing,
 And heaven's purer breath may have
 More ample space for its fresh prancing ?
 Giving to health a healthier glow ;
 Quick'ning the pulses that are low ;
 To youth maturity, to childhood age ;
 Poor, rich, hale, halt, unlearn'd, or sage ;
 A nursery playground, club, or forum ;
 A theatre, lounge, studio, sanatorium.
 Who gave these blessed boons to you and me ?
 He, she, or they—God 'quite their charity !

NIGHT.

IN the mute, holy Sabbath of the night,
 When angel eyes their twinkling vigils keep,
 Through the profound and solemn vault of blue,
 Come stealing to the heart (though finest ears
 Catch not the melody) entrancing chords
 Of heaven-made music, that attune anew
 The unstrung spirit, strained to dissonance
 By the ungentle touch of jarring lay.
 The waves of turbulence and pride ebb out,
 And leave the shores of calm reflection high
 Above their restless level ; but, alas !
 Their back retire lays bare the stranded wrecks
 Of many righteous purposes that swamp'd,
 And foundered in their strife.

FRAGMENT.

—Oh, blindness ! Oh, insensibility !
 What, seek the city ? Change this life of ours ?
 Canst hope to match it ? Cast thy eyes around ;
 On every side what beauty, what delights,
 Spread out before you ever fresh and fair.
 Each proper sense is here supplied in full—
 Taste, eyesight, feeling, odorous sense and sound,
 May here drink in their pure and full delight.
 You call it dull, monotonous, and sad !
 Only to dullards, or at least to those
 Who, dreaming of the pleasures far removed,
 Are blind to those close-hand, within their reach,
 Or view them through the sickly medium
 Of their own discontent.

Can any eye
 Travel athwart this rich perspective field
 Uncharmed, unsatisfied ? The glimmering sky
 Repeated in the river's glancing breast ;
 The dim horizon softly that retires
 Behind the sloping hill of golden corn,
 From which the lark springs merrily aloft ;
 The bolder woods, casting deep shadows here,
 There shaking sunlight from bright-tinted leaves ;
 While round us circles the pure health-fraught breeze
 Of the invigorating morn, to cheer
 The body's action, and make fit the mind
 To fashion forth the course that best adorns
 A life devoted to the pure and good.

THE OLD YEAR OUT,

THE old year's tide is ebbing out,
 And the new year's flood sets in ;
 Then give the old year's faults the rout,
 And with better will begin
 The new work of the coming time
 In the new year's early morn,
 As the eager mountain-hunters climb
 The hills ere break of dawn.

Pass in review your old year's work,
 And its sad shortcomings note ;
 Do not ensuing duties shirk,
 But find sloth's antidote.
 O'er foundered resolutions place
 A memory-mark, to warn,
 And gird the loins for labour's race,
 Discarding doubt with scorn.

If wrong thou'st done, seek to atone,
 Or balance it by good,
 And be thy true contrition shown
 In future brotherhood.
 Find out the work 'tis fit to do,
 And take that work in hand ;
 Nor falter till you bear it through,
 And better than when planned.

ON THE DEATH OF A YOUNG LADY AFTER A PARTY.

OH, joy and grief ! How sad to think
 That life's extreme emotions should
 Be joined by some mysterious link,
 Yoking the evil to the good !
 That pleasures light should often throw
 The shadow of dismay behind,
 And rosy bliss and phantom woe
 We should inseparable find !

The wreathèd smile of guileless joy ;
 The laughing light in youth's bright eye ;
 The glossy, dancing ringlets toy
 Round the smooth forehead chaste and high ;
 The music of the laugh that thrills
 The sense with its infectious glee,
 As the sun-lighted, babbling rills
 Lend life and beauty to the lea.

The smile relapses at the smart
 Of some insidious lurking pain ;
 The trickling tear usurps the part
 In eyes that ne'er will beam again.
 The crispèd locks lie moist and lank
 Upon the pain-flushed brow so fair ;
 The laugh is hushed in silence blank,
 Noting the reign of deep despair.

Yet perish thus the things of grace !
 Like a brief meteor of the eve,
 Leaving no hopeful after-trace
 The sore perdition to relieve ?
 Is change a loss, or mounting higher
 In the bright stages of the blessed,
 Achieving that which all desire,
 Reaching the goal of blissful rest ?

Oh ! let us temper, then, the grief
 And frailty of our human love
 With that specific—Hope's—relief
 Of sweet reunion above.
 " I go before you to prepare
 A place for you," as One hath said :
 There in her father's mansion fair
 She liveth, though ye mourn her dead.

LEX TALIONIS.

MINE not the skill which dare essay
 The lofty martial epic lay ;
 Nor on frail waxen wings take flight
 To scale the empyrean height ;
 Nor mimic-mock the flowing chime
 That echoes through the vaults of time.
 My light no heaven-hung constant star,
 Beaming resplendent from afar ;
 But a poor, feeble, earthly light,
 Flickering and dwindling through the night.

Small chance my unpretending lay
 May find a voice in after day ;
 Or serve for more than to compare
 Things that have been with what they are.
 It is a tale of doubtful birth,
 A vague tradition of the hearth ;
 In folk-lore dimly handed down,
 With what additions of its own
 I wot not of ; nor boots it now,
 E'en if I did, the joins to show.
 The mould of years doth blot the trace
 Of date of act, or note of place,
 Leaving indefinite the clime,
 The period " Once upon a time."

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In bitter days of old, when might
 Had law to sway in justice 'spite ;
 When human life and things more dear
 Were held on terms of doubt and fear ;
 When feudal bandits' will and power
 Were potent or to doom or dower ;
 And law imperial seldom screened
 The humble man, nor intervened
 The cover of protective shield
 Between the glaive that wrong might wield ;
 When outraged Nature's only plan
 Was desperate wreak for desperate man,
 Two sturdy yeomen brothers grew
 From youth to manhood, on the feu
 Of a great lord, whose donjon'd height
 Awed and subjected all in sight.
 The gibbet held its ghastly state
 Before the tyrant's frowning gate,
 And Death, at his capricious nod,
 Attended on him like a god ;
 For justice high and justice low
 Were in his mighty " Aye " or " No."
 Seignorial right's infernal claim
 O'er goods or body lay the same ;
 And at whate'er capricious plea
 Labour and love were held on fee.
 A former lord of milder sway
 Allowed some claims to die away,
 For better nature urged the claim
 Of Love's and Hymen's sacred flame,
 Unchecked by hard seignorial will,
 Or tax or toll more horrid still,
 That the first fruits of love's sweet zest
 Should yield to feudal lord's behest.
 This law relaxed, observance waned,
 And love grew free and unrestrained ;

But like a weapon of offence,
 Hung up in times of strife's suspense,
 Its point and edge doth still remain
 When drawn again for wreak and pain,
 And venal laws from long disuse
 May be restored for worse abuse.
 So was it then, as runs the tale,
 Through dim tradition's misty veil.
 These yeomen brothers, bold and young,
 Bred in fraternal love as strong,
 One maiden's more than common charm
 Woke to love's passion deep and warm ;
 But to the elder first was known
 His brother's passion ; thence his own,
 With painful throes, which fond hearts feel,
 He vowed to stifle or conceal.
 How hard the strife boots not to tell ;
 Only he kept his secret well.
 And when his brother, as of old,
 Sought his advice, his secret told ;
 He gave him heart, and help, and cheer,
 To win the maid to him most dear.
 The younger, Walter's, wooing sped,
 The maid was won, the pair were wed ;
 Roland, the elder, watched the rite
 With features calm, but deadly white ;
 Then forth the bridal cavalcade
 Set out through the green forest glade—
 A train of blithesome bridal guests,
 Who whiled the way with homespun jests,
 To muzette's pipe and tabor's drum,
 To cheer the rustic bringing-home.
 Oh ! who can guess the thoughts unspoke,
 Love's triumph in the bosom's woke,
 Of that young radiant, new-join'd pair—
 So manly he, and she so fair ?
 The dreamed-of long desire now crowned ;
 Doubt's tremors in assurance drowned ;
 The future with hope's rosy sheen
 Bright through the vista'd space was seen.
 The crowning prize of life achieved,
 And no known let or sorrow grieved.
 Well might the flush of victory
 Flash in the groom's dilated eye ;
 Well the carnation glow might speak
 The bride's pure pride on her warm cheek,
 And full content with frankness show
 The bliss of old 'twould disallow.
 The infectious merriment of joy
 Reigned in the cortége sans alloy,
 For Roseline's mirth and Walter's weal
 Made faithful Roland's pleasure real.

'Twas when the loudest laughter rung
 The greeny glades and aisles among,
 And lusty glce and gladsome life
 Remotest seemed from coil or strife ;
 When the loud ring of hunter's horn
 Through the sun-lighted maze was borne ;
 And startled stag, not yet at bay,
 By hounds close followed cross'd the way,
 And mounted men with eager bruit
 Close followed in the swift pursuit,
 And scarcely deigned to turn an eye
 Upon the bridal pageantry.
 But foremost of a gayer train,
 Came one who saw, and tightened rein
 With such a sudden act and thought,
 His steed was on his haunches brought,
 And, as by ruling influence swayed,
 The headlong chase was promptly stay'd.
 The tabor's beat, the piping shrill,
 As though by magic stopped, were still ;
 The laughter ceased in mid career,
 As though some spell had blighted cheer ;
 The bridal came to sudden halt,
 Like urchins when surprised at fault ;
 And doubt and apprehension's trace
 Was shown on every compeer's face.
 Some moments' pause to realise
 The motive of the prompt surprise ;
 And but some vulgar bridal seen,
 Devoid of interest and mean,
 And eager in the sport's delight,
 Onward their leader they invite.
 " Forward, my masters ! heed not me—
 I to your sport no bar will be ;
 But for myself my mood is bent
 On other fashioned merriment.
 Ride on ! ride on ! I but abide
 To greet the bridegroom and the bride."

He, with a prompt and hasty wave
 Of his gloved hand, the signal gave,
 And off they spur in swift career,
 In blithe pursuit of hound and deer.
 Some space the lingering cavalier
 Listened to their receding cheer ;
 Then, turning to the halted throng,
 Smilingly beckoned them along ;
 But 'twas a smile which, fitly read,
 A frown had boded better stead.
 With doubtful mien the silent band
 Advanced to where their lord did stand.
 " Gossips, how now ? What feast is toward
 That ye so gaily are abroad,

With favoured gowns and festal gear,
 And tabor's beat and bagpipe's cheer ?
 I wot not by my sacred fay
 Of what saint this the holy day.
 By Christi's rood ! ashamed I own,
 My calendar sore ill is known ;
 But you shall now my chiders be,
 And check me to more memory."
 E'en as he spake his mocking eye
 Ran o'er the bridal pageantry.
 But when his glance on Roseline fell ;
 In lingering look it paused to dwell.
 Roland with frank respect lit down,
 As did the men folk every one,
 And doffed their bonnets, kneeling there,
 While he related what did fare.
 Some spell on Walter's tongue seemed laid,
 Sad inward thought his speech betrayed,
 As Rosaline's trembling eyelids fell
 Beneath the glance that seemed to quell.
 The seigneur listened to the fine,
 With smile on lip and tranquil cyne,
 And, laughing, reined his courser near
 The bride now trembling, pale with fear.
 "Sweetheart," quoth he, "thy beauty's bloom
 May well excuse th' unmindful groom
 Of some slight lack of due regard
 To fealty's duty hitherward
 (Tapping his breast while thus he spake) ;
 For, by the blessed euch'rist cake !
 I wot of some forbears of mine
 Had reckoned with this spouse of thine,
 For lax respect and warning none,
 To lord whose land he liveth on.
 Trow you not, Master Walter, say
 That at no very long past day
 It was—was ! aye, is still—our right,
 To grant or claim the bridal night,
 Of bride of feudary, this hand
 Gave tenure to upon our land ?
 God's life ! our doomtree is a mock,
 And our seignorial rights a joke.
 We live in better days of grace,
 And freer license takes their place ;
 Yet, beauty, can I not forego
 All lordly privilege, ye trow,
 So claim we the now stinted power
 To yield the bride some nuptial dower ;
 And, sweeting, look ere night ye come
 To claim it at our castle home.
 God yield ye fair, Sir Groom and br de !
 Gossips be merry in your ride !

Cheer this young pair with all delight ;
 Can usher in a bridal night,
 In memory, ye who've passed that way,
 Or ye in hope, who court the day.
 Farewell ! and happiness be dole
 On this glad day to each good soul !"
 Then, with a seeming air of grace,
 He turned towards the castle chase.
 But, as possessed by sudden thought,
 To sudden halt his courser brought,
 And reined him brusquely round again
 Towards the rustic wedding train.
 His cheek was pale, his eyne were keen ;
 Still on his lips the smile was seen,
 As with a fixed, abstracted stare
 His nervous whip-hand lashed the air
 As though some scruple yet involved
 Doubt of the purpose he resolved.
 Not long the doubt, the pause not long,
 When might debates on right or wrong ;
 When the temptation's lures invite,
 And will alone bars lust's delight,
 Then high-blown pride knows little reck :
 To list to sober Conscience check.
 So, with a false but winning gest,*
 He Walter hailed, and thus addressed :
 " My memory counsels me, young swain,
 Of suit for lands you would obtain
 To better those you jointly hold
 With sturdy Roland in the wold.
 Times are there meet for every want—
 Times to deny, and times to grant.
 Faith ! I rejoice that my delay
 Postponed to such a fitting day
 My yielding favour to your case ;
 For now it shows more timely grace.
 When galliards wed, their wants will grow,
 And also should their means, I trow ;
 So shrew me not if I divide
 You for a space from your fresh bride,
 So to discuss as on we wend
 The drift towards which your wishes tend.
 Sweet ! let your thoughts find some excuse
 To soften this too much abuse,
 In robbing you, for some short while,
 Of your proud groom's all-conquering smile ;
 He shall not lack to give you proof
 We give you pain for your behoof,
 When to our castle's towers you come
 To lure the wandering loved one home.

* Gesture.

Stout Roland, for some few hours space
 Supply your brother's vacant place."
 He waved his hand to check reply,
 And wheeled his courser hurriedly,
 Inviting Walter with a gest,
 To follow and prefer his quest,
 Who, with a brisk, elated air,
 Spoke hopeful words to Roseline fair,
 And to his guests some parting speech,
 Rode off his lord to over-reach.*
 But in the group the broken cheer
 Did ominously domineer.
 The thoughtful cast of Roland's brow
 Did ill-assured expression show.
 Fair Roseline's cheek was pale and sad,
 And all a clouded aspect had,
 As slowly and in silence they
 Mount and resume their homeward way.

Leave them awhile we must to trace
 The course of sprightly Walter's case.
 When on his seigneur's track he rode,
 Although his horse of mettle good,
 His leader such swift course did make,
 He him was slow to overtake ;
 For, as the yeoman urged his steed,
 His master's spur woke hotter speed,
 Till, finally, the rising pace
 With one seemed flight, the other chase :
 For in the foremost's breast did lurk
 A demon prompting bloody work,
 From whom in fear he seemed to flee,
 But one who distanced would not be ;
 For, having lodged him there in thought,
 His fell persuasion must be wrought ;
 Still pressing with pernicious rede,†
 Dire motives for the damned deed ;
 Stirring his passion wild and deep,
 And lulling conscience into sleep.
 Power, and impunity, and lust,
 Combined 'gainst weakest pleadings just ;
 For vicious habit is too strong
 To war with feeble virtues long,
 Or house at once in such a breast
 A hellish and a heavenly guest.
 Thus rode they till they reached a glade
 Of wildest growth and deeper shade,
 Where overhanging branches grew
 Too thick to let the daylight through.

* Overtake.

† Advice.

A spot where no bird's note was heard,
 No wild flower grew, nor bourgeon stirr'd.
 The truant wind seemed there struck dumb,
 And hushed its cadent sylvan hum.
 No sound of stream through channelled bed ;
 No squirrel sporting overhead ;
 No incense fresh of summer's breath ;
 But all was dorn above, beneath,
 And wore a weird, funereal air,
 Meet for a vile assassin's lair.
 Here made he halt, and seemed to brood
 In sullen and determined mood ;
 Drew off his glove, and wiped his brow,
 Pallid and bright as marble's glow ;
 And with a deadly malice eyed
 Walter, who rode up to his side.
 " Now, then," he said at length, " Sir Knave,
 We'll harken to this suit you crave.
 More lands to hold, eh ? By the rood !
 I wot thou hast been vassal good :
 Not one on all my fair domain
 Of thriftier heed nor busier pain ;
 Not one with more alacrity
 To yield me service nor supply ;
 No flaxen web of finer woof,
 No woolen gear more weather-proof ;
 Your talle of meal and unmulled grain—
 The fairest sample in the plain ;
 Your steers and stock the choicest breed,
 Your arm of strength and foot of speed.
 In martial service at my call—
 I grant you each and grant you all
 Of these, and much more duty done.
 Yet, Sirrah, of defaults there's one,
 Which, counterpoised 'gainst all, doth seem
 To make allegiance kick the beam.
 This mating without licence, due
 By bounden vassal such as you,
 By holy Peter's sacred crook !
 Is a transgression ill to brook.
 Deem'st thou that I my rights, Sir Knave,
 With such scant courtesy shall waive,
 Because my father's humour may
 Have let observance old decay,
 And weakly so a passage show
 All feudal trammels to break through ?
 Let power with such lax hand be held
 In wall'd keep and open field.
 Reluctant suit would soon afford
 But empty trenchers for my board ;
 And in war's muster-roll, I trow,
 My levy would make sorry show.

I yield there is necessity
 Vassals must wed, breed, toil, and die ;
 But 'tis your liege lord's will must grant
 The leave to regulate the want.
 With him exists the potent voice
 To sanction, not to suffer choice.
 To this condition your neglect
 Has shown us but a scant respect.
 But I will listen what reply
 You find this act to justify."
 Thus taxed, poor Walter stood at bay
 With blank amaze and sheer dismay,
 And o'er his changeful visage spread,
 First deadly white, then burning red.
 With kindling eye, and lips compressed,
 And clenched hands, and heaving chest,
 The rebel manhood in his heart
 Repugned the crouching vassal's part,
 And threatened to let loose the flood
 Of latent daring in his blood ;
 For love's impelling ardour now
 Lent it a firmer, fiercer glow,
 And prompted words to mate the thought
 With which his panting heart was fraught.
 But love that fires, if it be true,
 Can calm and chasten and subdue,
 When unlet ire might haply prove
 An ill to those it most doth love.
 So thought of Roseline was a spell
 His first defiant mood to quell,
 And soothe his speech to calmer use
 To plead his love as his excuse.
 With frank and manly eloquence,
 He urged "new usage" in defence ;
 That in his time no lordly claim
 Of love's free choice had made a blame ;
 How to all loyal service good,
 He'd yield his store, and toil, and blood,
 One grace allowed to sweeten life,
 His heart-elected, loving wife.
 But, with an ear as dead as stone,
 The lord, who seemed to listen on,
 Received them ; for the voice of sin
 Spoke louder to him from within ;
 And, as he flapped his gauntlet round,
 It 'scaped his hand, and fell to ground,
 Which, Walter noting, without check
 Dropped rein upon his horse's neck,
 And, from his sell* to forest floor,
 Leaped down the gauntlet to restore,

* Saddle.

When suddenly from sharp cravache,*
 Assailed by many a rapid lash,
 His startled horse in wild affright,
 Off darting, disappeared from sight.
 Then, fiercely dashed to earth his lash,
 The lord his hand with vivid flash
 From gaint† plucked forth his polished blade,
 The which a glow of brightness made,
 As, reining round his steed of blood
 To where th' astonished Walter stood,
 And striking spurs into its side,
 He at the youth full tilt did ride,
 Who, though like one from dream awoke,
 By rapid dodge escaped the stroke ;
 But, oft obeying ruling rein,
 The courser wheeled, he struck again ;
 The youth evading oft the stroke ;
 While execration, wrath, and rauque,‡
 The lord, by deadly anger fired,
 Vented as by a fiend inspired.
 Hard pressed, ill knowing what to do,
 His short wood-knife poor Walter drew,
 For labour framed, but not for fray
 In which all odds against it lay.
 Desperate, he wards the coming blow,
 Then cuts the courser's hamstring through ;
 But, though the steed like thunder fell,
 The lord on soil alighted well,
 And at the youth in fury drove,
 Who long in hopeless effort strove,
 By nimble shift or sturdy ward,
 To get within the baron's guard ;
 But he had skilful fence to aid,
 As well as greater length of blade.
 But more the fiend assistance lent,
 For when, by long-drawn effort spent,
 One chance the watchful Walter found,
 Closing with eager, sudden bound,
 The slippery soil his foot betrayed,
 And on the earth him prostrate laid.
 Ere he could rise the sword-point pressed
 Remorselessly had pierced his breast.
 With ruthless fury, fierce as vain,
 The thrust fell o'er and o'er again ;
 The blood welled forth in crimson tide,
 And, murmuring "Roseline," Walter died.
 With pallid face and haggard stare,
 The murderer stood exultant there ;
 Nor seemed it as if Death could quell
 The bitter wreak of malice fell,

* Whip.

† Scabbard.

‡ Hoarse.

For, trampling on the senseless dead,
 'Through teeth compressed he mutter'd :
 " Base and presumptuous rebel hound,
 Though not thy proper meed thou'st found,
 'Twill serve to mark that ne'er again
 Vassal may slight his lord in vain.
 Could I have curbed in cooler bound
 My just resentment, thou had'st found
 What tortures cunning could devise
 To make my vassals 'ware and wise.
 Though thy bride's name on dying tongue
 Bespoke a thought perhaps that wrung
 Thy soul with parting pang as keen
 As wrack or pincer's tug had been,
 If it but imaged the full bent
 Of my immutable intent,
 To make *her* minion my delights
 When thou hast fed the crows and kites."
 Spurning once more with cruel heel
 Him who no more the slight could feel,
 He turned away to give some heed
 To the poor maimed and plunging steed ;
 But, finding it in hopeless case,
 He slew him there, and left the place.

Meanwhile the bridal train in gloom,
 The bridegroom wanting, home had come ;
 But, though no lack of festal fare,
 There was no festal humour there.
 The cloud of evil-boding fear
 O'er each and all did domineer.
 The fare neglected on the board,
 The wine and mead and ale unpoured,
 In two sad groups the wedding guests -
 Or counselled hope, or doubt confessed—
 In silence Roland seemed to hear
 The friendly speech of each compeer ;
 While, for sad-minded Roseline's part,
 With ear she listened, not with heart.
 Hers was with Walter, and, till he
 Brought them, no hope nor joy could be.
 He came not ! But when day was late,
 His horse came straggling to the gate.
 Then hope in every heart gave way,
 And apprehension grew dismay.
 Then Roseline's grief, so long repressed,
 In deepest anguish stood confessed.
 A woe so sad, yet desperate,
 No soothing power might mitigate,
 Till nature, spent by poignant grief,
 In kind oblivion brought relief.

But how on sturdy Roland bold
 The action wrought must now be told ;
 For Roseline, given to tender aid,
 A prompt and earnest suit he made
 To each compeer to mount and ride
 In separate search on every side,
 Which wish they met with friendly heed,
 And went their several ways with speed.
 The night was old, a night of storm ;
 Dark clouds were massed in battle form ;
 While some in rapid flight seemed driven
 Like conquered squadrons through the heaven.
 From cloud to cloud flash answered flash,
 And thunder's growl met thunder's crash.
 The sulphurous air was hot and dry ;
 No wild beast's howl, no night-bird's cry
 Was heard the dreary forest through,
 Where darkness oft to glimmer grew,
 Intensifying by their might
 The strong extremes of shade and light.
 Yet eagerly one errant form,
 Spite of the solitude and storm,
 His anxious, hopeless search pursued,
 The issue but too surely rued.*
 Through many a drear and mazy glade,
 And hollows of grim nightly shade,
 Some instinct or unerring slot
 Seemed leading to the fatal spot.
 Deeper his dire forebodings grew
 As near the gloomy glen he drew,
 Where, dimly groping for his course,
 He stumbled o'er the baron's horse.
 Confused, he rose, and peered around,
 Noting the newly-trampled ground ;
 Examined then with closer heed
 The trappings of the slaughtered steed ;
 Then on his heart a weight of lead
 Oppressive fell with hopeless dread.
 He felt, he knew, some fatal fray
 Had broken up the grassy way,
 That he should find stretched on the sward
 The corpse of Walter or his lord.
 And the cold shudder shook his frame,
 Marking the fear he dare not name.
 A stifled moan his breast gave out ;
 His glance was wildly cast about.
 The anguish of his soul broke forth
 Half in despair and half in wrath :
 " Oh, Walter ! Walter ! Brother mine,
 What bitter bode to thee and thine ;

* Doubted.

Art thou by foul oppression sped ?
 Or hast thou slain him, and art fled
 Safety from vengeful power to find ?
 Oh, Roselinde ! Oh, Roselinde !
 To thee the either chance must be
 A fatal, certain misery !
 Oh ! let me end this killing strife—
 Hope with despair and death with life.
 When all is known, the worst is known,
 And then what must be—*shall be done.*”
 Around the steed, with tottering tread,
 He then in devious circles sped,
 With body bent and head declined,
 And eager eyes some trace to find
 That surest evidence would give—
 Was Walter dead or did he live ?
 Short time he sought before he found
 His favoured bonnet on the ground ;
 And as he stooped the cap to raise,
 The thunder burst, the lightnings blaze,
 And, flashing on the yeoman's blade,
 The murdered brother's corse betrayed,
 Outstretched and stiff, in bloody plight,
 Clutching the haft in Death's firm might.
 A wild and awful cry of dread
 Joined to the thunder overhead,
 And mingled with the echoed boom
 That replicated through the gloom.
 He bounded, knelt beside the corse,
 And gasped and sobbed in accents hoarse :
 “ Oh Walter ! Brother ! Foully slain !
 Shall I ne'er hear thy voice again ?
 That voice so frank, so kind in tone,
 In childhood, youth, and manhood known ;
 Whose well-loved sound from year to year
 Made me more fond, and thou more dear.
 Thus treacherously done to death.
 Hast thou no life, no pulse, no breath ?
 No lingering spark to fan and aid
 To snatch thee from the icy shade ?”
 With hurried hands he ope'd the vest,
 His hand laid on the gory breast.
 'Twas cold and pulseless as the clay
 On which the hapless yeoman lay.
 The limbs were stiff, the teeth were set ;
 But the dimmed eyes were open yet ;
 And as the fitful lightning gleamed,
 Their glazed and upturned aspect seemed
 Appealing, in their stony stare,
 To heaven for retribution there.
 When Roland knew all help was vain,
 Silent long time he did remain,

Claspings his brother's senseless form ;
 While louder, fiercer waxed the storm,
 Till one fierce peal and vivid glance
 Aroused him from his seeming trance.
 " Ah ! well," he cried, " the heavens in ire
 May mutter 'gainst a deed so dire ;
 Well the indignant sky may groan
 A fiendish deed like this to own ;
 And well the lightning's blinding scathe
 May flash the horror that it hath.
 The elements are wrath and wode*
 At this atrocious act of blood,
 And speak to earth and man to meed
 A due requital of the deed.
 And shall a brother's blood thus flow,
 And no redress from vengeance know ?
 No ; from the earth it calls to heaven !
 Here be a brother's answer given,
 Over this mute and murdered form.
 By him who holds and guides the storm ;
 By all the common right men share
 To walk the earth and breathe the air,
 To nurse the love of kind and kin,
 The love of good and hate of sin ;
 By this deep wrong to man and God ;
 By tooth for tooth, and blood for blood ;
 By outraged nature's loving law ;
 By all that binds with sacred awe ;
 By busy day or peaceful night ;
 By secret stealth or open might,
 To know no respite of the intent
 Of that to which my thoughts are bent—
 I swear ! While earth the monster bears,
 To sink all reverence and fears
 Of his condition or his power,
 And bide the sure avenging hour !
 But first an urgent task I have :
 The weak to help, the loved to save.
 Roseline in safety, I may bend
 My vengeance to the bitter end.
 Brother ! thou canst not hear my vow,
 Alas ! but it will keep, I trow !
 But thou shalt rest 'neath holy rood,
 Nor serve for kites nor wild beast's food.
 Come ! I have borne thee oft before ;
 Ne'er hast thou burdened me so sore."

He stooped and raised the corse with care,
 And homeward through the storm did fare.
 That night a friendly priest was pressed
 The office of sweet " Peace and Rest !"

For Walter's soul, in ruth to yield,
 O'er secret grave in holy field.
 A rough-hewn cross in hurry made,
 Was planted and the turf relaid :
 The silent resting-place alone
 To Roland and the father known.

It would be Fancy's proper flight
 To guess how wildly passed the night
 With him whose ruthless hand and will
 Had wrought this wrong and planned this ill.
 Did no compunction in his breast
 Make thought a dread and banish rest ?
 Was not his guilty conscience riven
 By the dire menacing of heaven ?
 Was there no voice his breast within
 Which threatened wrath for murder's sin ?
 Or no repentant lone regret
 Might point the way to mercy yet ?
 His thoughts are heaven's, his pangs his own,
 If such he felt. No more is known
 Than through the night his restless tread
 Paced up and down, unpressed his bed,
 And the next morn revealed a change
 In him, as startling as 'twas strange,
 To those who saw but knew not why,
 His haggard cheek and bloodshot eye,
 His pallid lips and vacant stare,
 His knitted brow and rumpled hair,
 Remorse could scarcely lend a mien,
 So wolfish and so vilely keen ;
 Nor could regret impart a mood
 So destitute of purpose good.
 No ; rather did these signs appear
 To mark some hardened purpose there,
 That having once adventured in,
 To follow out the track of sin.
 In mood that boded no behoof,
 He mounted to his donjon roof,
 And scowled down on the waving wood
 Where he had wrought the deed of blood.
 His lips in smile malignant set,
 Bespoke his hate unsated yet ;
 But as he glanced across the wold
 He saw a volumed smoke up-rolled
 Through early morning's misty grey,
 On the horizon far away.
 His wide domain's dimension known,
 For leagues the country all his own,
 He stood as rooted by a spell :
 He knew the region's lay too well

To doubt from whence the rising smoke
 In thick'ning columns darkly broke.
 And some dark inward consciousness
 Awoke conviction in his breast
 Of a defeated vile intent
 That to his mien new evil lent.
 "'Tis Roland's homestead," he exclaims
 In muttered fury, "is in flames !
 Is it mishap, or purposed wile,
 Me of my vengeance to beguile ?
 He would not dare, vile boorish slave,
 My unrelenting vengeance brave !
 Can he have yet so early come
 To knowledge of his brother's doom ?
 No ; Roseline's charms may yet requite
 My longing, for her lover's slight.
 A fair pretext may now appear
 To offer her a shelter here.
 But first my horsemen to alarm,
 And gallop off to Roland's farm.
 Meanwhile dispatch some to the chase
 T'obliterate the odious trace,
 By gore and trampling footmarks made,
 Of the keen contest in the glade ;
 And hide from sight each tell-tale corse
 Of carrion hind and carrion horse.
 Then let conjecture work and mount,
 For Walter's absence to account.
 The worst, if guessed, to me alone
 And to my minions can be known."
 To hurry down, the space was short,
 From donjon roof to donjon court ;
 To call his trusted henchman bye,
 And give his orders secretly ;
 To call his arm'd riders out,
 To give command and point the rout ;
 Brief time to saddle and array :
 The impatient lord brooks no delay.
 "Up with portcullis ! Drawbridge down !"
 He orders with a bodeful frown.
 And hurriedly they mount to selle,*
 And clatter after him pell-mell.
 No thrift of spur, no tight'ning rein,
 In all the fleeting, jingling train.
 Through glades and bridle-paths they sped,
 Like warriors to some fierce charge led ;
 And many a roused and startled deer
 Sought deeper covert, in its fear :
 Then, panting, paused, and looked around,
 Relieved to find no following hound.

But as the troop the farm drew nigh,
 A black'ning reek o'erspread the sky,
 And choking grew the burning scent
 From stacks and barns and byres besprent.
 Then through the forest clearing came
 The vivid gleams of mounting flame,
 And soaring sparks, and lurid flash,
 And falling beams, and timbers' crash,
 And groups of peasants, who stood
 In hopeless and bewildered mood,
 Blankly surveying in dismay
 The ruin which no hand could stay.
 The raging conflagration wide,
 Devoured unlet on every side.
 No living stock, no winter store,
 No roof of thatch, no timber floor,
 No fodder-pile, no faggot-heap,
 No stable-hold, no shed for sheep,
 No stack in field, nor garner'd seed—
 No household stuff but help'd to feed
 The ruthless, all-consuming fire,
 Which reigned in fierce resistless ire.
 No human skill had power to check,
 But helpless gaze upon the wreck ;
 No human vision e'er could meet
 A fierce destruction more complete.

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As up the lord and followers rode
 The assembled groups, uncover'd, bow'd,
 Which little then their liege, indeed,
 Appeared to notice or to heed.
 The widespread ruin held his view,
 And fixed his fierce conjecture, too.
 The blazing farmstead's wrecks but tend
 His wreck of hope to comprehend ;
 And as it shrinks in smoke and flare,
 His own devices melt in air.
 A prescience whispered in his thought
 His baffled will was set at nought,
 And in its tottering piles were shown
 His purposes all crumbling down.
 The question he would ask, his mind
 The answer has too well divined ;
 Yet must he ask it : " Masters, say
 Roland and Roseline, where are they ?"
 No prompt reply this question found.
 Each to his fellow gazes round,
 Anxious, to others yield the place,
 'To answer in the sorry case.
 At length the pause so painful grew
 Some one, perforce, must answer to

Their lord's inquiry, who began
 With angry glance the group to scan.
 Then one reluctantly came through
 The dazed and mute surrounding few,
 And in suppressed and bated tone
 Related all to them was known.
 How, riderless, the steed had come,
 And filled with dread the bridal home ;
 How each, with boding and unrest,
 Had ridden forth in Walter's quest,
 And back returned through storm and rain,
 And that of each the search was vain ;
 That later, too, came Roland back
 Silent and haggard from his track :
 To questions asked his sole reply,
 " He's dead ! He's dead for certainty !
 I must resolve what must be done.
 Keep you no longer, friends, from home ;
 And pray God ye find more behoof
 Than ye will leave beneath this roof !
 But how fares Roseline, prithee tell ?"
 " She sleeps." " So best. Friends all, farewell !"
 The women folk would fain have stayed
 To render Roseline further aid ;
 But Roland firmly said them nay ;
 And thus, in fine, they went away.
 " Further than this we others know,
 Alas ! no more nor less than you :
 The flames have done their task too well
 To leave a trace more truth to tell."

Fierce and malign as tempest's glow
 The baron's evil eyes did show ;
 Their orbs, suffused like tinct' of blood,
 Strained fix'dly on the burning flood,
 Which surged and licked and madly roared,
 Levelling as it wildly soared.
 Amid the glow he seemed to peer,
 As seeking out his victims there.
 His brows with baffled discontent
 With deep and furrowed frown was bent :
 To feel unbridled power meet check
 Before that elemental wreck ;
 Destruction's breath his limits brave.
 Nothing to seize, nothing to save ;
 Nought left but burning fierce suspense.
 " If those he sought are there or hence !
 Hence ! hence !" One sudden mental glance
 Suggests a prompt, an only chance :
 To break his troop in several squads,
 Numerous enough for certain odds ;

To scatter couriers far and wide
 To scour the track on every side.
 If *they* still *were*, though faint the hope,
 To get them in his vengeance' scope,
 If *not*, at least he'd know at last
 That hope and vengeance both were past;
 With spur and rein, with sudden bound,
 He caused his courser to wheel round.
 "Succour or saving here are vain,
 As 'tis that we should more remain.
 Short time before this fiery thrall
 Will have consumed and levelled all.
 What boots to bide and gape and rue?
 What helping hand can none undo?
 Come! to the Castle we'll return;
 And, while it will—why, let it burn!"
 He dashed away, they following sped,
 Their trapping's brightness glinting re
 Till the fierce conflagration's blaze
 Sunk in the deep'ning forest-maze;
 When, calling halt, he orders gave:
 "Nor spur to spare, nor lash to save,
 But from the centre where they stood
 Right on to ride through weald and wood;
 To east, to north, to south, to west,
 In Roland's and in Roseline's quest;
 And they who 'lighted on the track,
 To seize and bring the 'fugees back—
 For theirs the hands in vile despite
 Had kindled this incend'ry light—
 A hundred marks the troop shall win
 Which brings the flying traitors in;
 A hundred more I will divide
 'Mong all who on the track shall ride.
 Away at once, nor slacken rein
 Till reached the skirts of my domain.
 Hubert-le-Rouse, your men divide,
 And point them out their several ride;
 And to each squad appoint command
 Responsible in head and hand.
 And briefly; for each fleeting space
 Is priceless in this eager chase;
 For I with restless fever burn
 Till they are hence, and back return."
 Hubert-le-Rouse with rapid ken
 Selects and portions out his men.
 Each party's rout is quick assigned,
 Each leader's orders well defined.
 And, like a star's departing rays,
 They shoot along a dozen ways;
 While, filled with deep devouring spite
 The baron seeks his castle's height,

And restless, on expectant rack,
 Awaits his troopers coming back.
 One long-drawn day of dumb despite;
 One restless, feverish, sleepless night;
 Another yet, when eve drew on—
 Of the returning troopers none.
 Hour after hour, by blazing hearth,
 He sat in sullen, silent wrath;
 And only with the early dawn
 Was heard the watchful warder's horn.
 Troop after troop dejected came,
 And every answer was the same:
 No trace, no clue, no tidings won;
 The chase was vain, the victims gone.
 Escaped? or dead? Whichever way,
 Lust or revenge had missed its prey;
 And bitter 'twas for Passion's thrall
 To drink of Disappointment's gall.

* * * *

The woods were thick, the way was wild;
 Yet through the refts an evening smiled—
 As gorgeous, purple, golden, grand,
 In mellow glow and shadows bland—
 As ever lulled declining day
 Into the arms of twilight grey.
 Belated birds in weary flight
 Sought woody nests on beetling height,
 And drowsy moans from Nature's breast,
 Heralded night, and gloom, and rest.
 Rest! blessed rest! so welcome when
 It comes to over-weary men,
 Who, roughly strung to bear the strain
 Of o'er-exerted travel-pain,
 May welcome thee as babe the breast,
 Whereto in love 'tis fondly prest;
 But when the fragile female form,
 Of withering grief has borne the storm,
 Despair's fierce dint and Terror's chill,
 If yields the power, if fails the will,
 Under such stress of agonies,
 Pity may be, but not surprise.
 Lo! where beneath the dark'ning dome
 Some dimly moving shadows come
 Wearily through the forest screen,
 Descending the abrupt ravine.
 Two jaded steeds, one bridle-led:
 A female form (fainting or dead?)
 Helplessly stretched—her hair aflow—
 Across the horseman's saddle bow;

And with an anxious heed imprest
 With caution to his earnest breast.
 How eagerly he peers around,
 Scanning the rude, uneven ground ;
 Guarding from ill that might betide,
 From slippery way or nerveless stride.
 What little light doth linger now
 Reflects on his care-clouded brow
 A woe so deep, distress so fell,
 No words of mine have power to tell.
 Through bronzed cheek and basane brow
 A deadly paleness pierces now ;
 A ghastly light his eye-balls dart ;
 His lips are painfully apart ;
 And his whole air sadly besprent
 With sickly, wild bewilderment.
 The limping steeds, both vigour-spced,
 With drooping ears and faltering tread,
 No fire of mettle in the eye,
 Plod lamely on and languidly,
 With quivering flanks and shortened breath,
 Broken and foundered nigh to death.
 As the low-bottomed dell they gain
 An oozing spring doth trickling drain
 Its sparkling crystal, clear and cool,
 Into a shallow rocky pool ;
 Its tinkling murmurs lightly play
 A moment, and then pass away,
 Lost in the herbage, rankly grown,
 By which the dingle's floor is strewn.
 The horses halt upon the brink,
 And eagerly and longly drink.
 The man, too, doth with care dismount,
 And bear his burden to the fount ;
 Laying his charge along the sward
 With tender care and fond regard.
 A kerchief in the stream he dips,
 And bathes her temples and her lips,
 And by all means within his power
 Seeks the unconscious to restore—
 Her name repeating o'er and o'er :
 " Roseline ! dear Roseline ! speak once more !
 This faintness sure cannot be death !
 Thy lips still utter vital breath ;
 Thy hand, tho' cold, hath yet some heat ;
 Thy pulse doth throb, thy heart doth beat ;
 But in this wild and lonely spot
 Shelter is none, and help is not.
 Though past the hellish tyrant's bound,
 No Christian succour can be found.
 With horses spced and over-done
 I could not leave thee here alone ;

To forest beast perhaps a prey
 The while your guardian was away !
 Helpless and hopeless seems my plight ;
 Despair, and solitude, and night
 Seem gathering round us. Which way turn ?
 My heart is sick ; my temples burn ;
 My throat is seared ; my tongue is dust
 With dread anxiety. I slake it must !"
 He kneels, and from the trickling stream
 He scoops him up his two-hands' teem,*
 And drinks a deep-drawn draught t'allay
 The thirst to which he is a prey ;
 And gazes desperately around
 To where the steeds sink on the ground,
 And stretch out in the sheer distress
 Of utter, helpless weariness.
 "Poor beasts !" he murmurs ; "they sink down
 Their willing powers quite overthrown :
 Further to tax them now were vain ;
 Restless, they'll never rise again."
 He rises then, and takes his way
 To where the jaded creatures lay,
 With sad but ruthless thought to allay
 Their sorry state well as he may.
 Their saddle girths and bridle gear
 Unbuckles, frees, and leaves them clear : -
 Pityingly eyes the prostrate pair,
 Addressing them with mournful air :
 "Poor creatures ! grant no beasts of night
 Surprise ye in this woeful plight.
 Far better with my hunting knife
 That I myself let out your life ;
 But no ! take ye the chance that may
 Be born of rest and light of day."
 Turning away with heavy stride,
 He now returns to Roseline's side.
 Still in unconscious, death-like state,
 His help seems vain to palliate ;
 For every tender means he tries,
 And every thoughtful aid applies ;
 Yet still so strong the trance's spell
 It holds her in its clutches fell.
 His features now begin to wear
 The solemn aspect of despair ;
 Her hand between his hand is prest ;
 Her head rests on his heaving breast ;
 A sickly light within his eye
 Bespeaks his dread anxiety--
 A cheerless and bewildered dread,
 No hope to light ! no help to stead !

* Brimming over.

His soul seems like the fading light
 Sinking to rayless, blackest night ;
 When on the air the distant ring
 Of vesper-bell comes tinkling.
 A start ! A perfect, instant change
 Comes o'er the man, as sudden, strange,
 As when the ghastly nightmares fade,
 And wakeful safety's lovelier made.
 He rises quickly, glances round
 To catch from whence proceeds the sounds ;
 Glances above to scan the ray
 Which lights the clouds of dying day ;
 Then earthward through the forest vast
 To note which way the shadows cast ;
 Listens again, and seems relieved
 That by no echo he's deceived :
 Grows radiant with awakened hope
 That the dilemma he may cope.
 He raises Roseline from the sward
 With the same tender, fond regard
 As a devoted mother might
 Yield to her infant heart's-delight ;
 And guided by that distant bell,
 He quits the lonely, dark'ning dell.

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How, guided by that vesper bell
 He reached a convent let me tell :
 Secluded quite and built apart
 Within the very forest's heart,
 The holy sisters, with surprise,
 Heard his appeal with pitying eyes,
 And prompt in ruthless ministry
 Shelter and succour both supply.
 The best, though plainly-furnished cell
 To Roseline's urgent need befell.
 All cares which Pity's tender art
 Could prompt and lovingly impart,
 They furnish with untiring will
 Of patient watch and leechly skill ;
 Yet was her sad unconsciousness
 So deep, to baffle all redress.
 For hours, for days, in piteous strait
 She lay ; they could but watch and wait.
 Sad Roland, to the care consigned
 Of sister-lay and labouring hind,
 In neighbouring lodge was housed the while.
 To bide the event and time beguile,
 For hours beside her couch, each day
 The sisters suffered him to stay ;

And soon they found, so deep his grief,
 That silence was his best relief.
 And so he mutely came and went
 As melancholy impulse bent.
 But when away from Roseline's side,
 He'd roam the gloomy forest wide,
 In hope to quell his mind's distress
 By dint of utter weariness.
 The jaded steeds, too spent to roam,
 He sought, and with their gear brought home ;
 But in the stall unsold they stood.
 On foot he roamed, alone to brood
 On the uncertain after-state
 That should o'errule or fix his fate.

Five nights and days, unconsciously,
 In seeming death, did Roseline lie ;
 But when the fifth day's close drew nigh,
 Her lips gave forth a long-drawn sigh,
 Which caused the silent sisters start
 Who then performed the watcher's part.
 The sinking day, with growing gloom,
 With deep'ning shadow filled the room ;
 Which left a doubt, and then a fear,
 That fancy had deceived their ear.
 Over the couch, eagerly bent,
 They watch, with anxious hope intent ;
 And soon another sigh as deep
 Proclaims the end of death-like sleep.
 One hurries out, then back ere long,
 Attended by the sister throng,
 With lights, but screened with thoughtful care
 To mitigate the sudden glare.
 Low-whispered hopes and glances kind
 On Roseline's face one centre find—
 So marble-white, so calm, so sweet,
 With innocence's charm replete.
 Her hands, so waxen as they lay—
 The sheets not whiter seemed than they—
 Some feeble signs of motion give,
 To show the seeming dead doth live.
 Again her lips uncloze ; her breast
 Upheaves, as by some pang oppressed ;
 A heavier, deeper breath expires
 And melts as distant sound retires ;
 Slowly from side to side her head
 Rolls on the softly-pillowed bed ;
 Her arms outspread, and clutch at air ;
 Her eyes uncloze with vacant stare ;
 But yet no sense of vision shown,
 Nor no surrounding objects known.

At last her mind begins to wake,
 Her face a conscious look to take ;
 Deep wonder, with a touch of dread,
 From her dilated eyes are shed.
 As in bewilderment her gaze
 Seeks to pierce through dim memory's haze
 Her lips attempt to fashion word ;
 But not an answering sound is heard.
 So the kind sisterhood essay
 To calm her wondering fears away,
 By gentle words and gestures kind,
 Which find a meaning in her mind.
 As they restoring cordials tend,
 And every soothing service lend,
 Her sense returns, her thoughts begin
 From outward things to turn within,
 And lend her looks an earnest cast,
 As struggling to recall the past.
 And as the painful memory breaks,
 And bitter consciousness awakes,
 A pitiable sadness grows,
 Marking the dawning of her woes.
 Her anxious and inquiring glance
 She round the shadowy cell doth lance,
 And an imploring, piteous air,
 Easily read—"My brother ! where ?"
 "I've sent for him. Nay, calm your fear ;
 He's safe, and will be shortly here."
 She clasps her hands, and tranquil lies ;
 Her thankful prayers to heaven arise.
 The sad-eyed sisters silent stand,
 An ominous and thoughtful band.
 Their mental prayers seem to combine :
 With hers, rise to the source divine.
 A solemn picture, though—it had
 An air both sorrowful and sad.
 Now, through the sacred, silent gloom,
 The sound of hurried footsteps come.
 The sisterhood, with eyes askance,
 Cast to the door an anxious glance ;
 To which the approaching footfall nears,
 And Roland presently appears—
 An air of sad anxieties
 And wild inquiry in his eyes ;
 Something of hope, but more of dread,
 In their quick scrutiny is read,
 As though some sad forecast of thought,
 Had the worst-dreaded issue taught.
 But sad to note the ghastly phase
 Sorrow can mark in some few days :
 Years, were they tranquil, had left less
 Traces of physical distress.

A shrunken form, a visage pale,
 Replaced the man so stalwart, hale ;
 The upward look, so frank and bold,
 Is haggard now, and fixed and cold ;
 And in the yeoman's general air
 A shadowing of dull despair ;
 And yet a gleam of purpose bent
 To far-off, desperate intent.
 The pause and hush had solemn bode
 As at the open door he stood,
 Till the superior's beck'ning glance
 Gave signal that he should advance.
 With noiseless tread he forward press'd,
 His left hand bearing on his breast,
 As to suppress some eager smart,
 Or wild pulsation of his heart.
 As he drew near to Roseline's couch,
 Her faint smile welcomed his approach ;
 A momentary glance, from whence
 A dawning, faint intelligence
 Bespoke the recognition dim.
 Although so great the change in him.
 Feebly her nerveless hand arose
 To meet his clasp in trembling close ;
 And her pale face expression took
 A wondering and questioning look,
 Which Roland lost the power to meet ;
 For his whole frame, from head to feet,
 As though by sudden ague taken,
 Is by a strong convulsion shaken.
 His trembling limbs and heaving trunk,
 His quivering features, wan and shrunk,
 By a wild inward spasm rent,
 Will not be stilled till tears find vent ;
 So sinking down in wildest grief,
 In sobs and tears to seek relief,
 Of unlet vent of sorrow's smart,
 Which else had burst his surcharged heart.
 'Tis so when wintry mount and hill,
 Snow-piled and bound in ice-lock's chill,
 Obeying Nature's constant law,
 Their fetters break by softening thaw ;
 Their pent-up might in tumult come
 In cataracts and maddest foam—
 In the wild turbulence of checkless strain ;
 Nor calmly flow till reached the vernal plain.
 Mutely grouped round the pitying sisters stood,
 Till passed the first wild rush of sorrow's flood ;
 Feeling how vain to soothe, or seek console,
 The outburst of a strong, resistless dote,
 Which, once let loose, the more extended vent—
 More the relief, its anguish, quicker spent.

But for poor Roseline, his acute distress
 Seemed to recall her to more consciousness.
 But as the dim oblivious clouds disperse,
 Came memory, thought—both than oblivion worse.
 The painful past before her seemed to grow,
 And in her face its strong reflection show—
 A hopeless, helpless, haggard, pitying stare
 Of irremediable blank despair.
 A low-breathed, wailing sigh her breast exhales,
 An inward, tearless grief, which naught avails.
 No ruthless sympathy can reach or cheer,
 And into which affection dreads to peer.
 The sobs, still breaking from poor Roland's breast,
 Seem to awake for him her most unrest.
 Feebly her wasted hand seeks out his head,
 Deep-cushion'd in the softly-yielding bed.
 The voiceless recognition seems no less
 Than words her grateful feelings to express ;
 And tender thoughtfulness is mutely shown,
 His deep affliction marking as her own.
 The heedful principal with silent glide
 Approaches now to sorrowing Roland's side,
 And whispers him with pitying voice and low,
 Less grief and greater cautiousness to show.
 "Sister, you're right ; the weakness was unwise ;
 But yet the strength not always in us lies
 To war with pent emotions, stronger throes,
 Nor stifle down the might of heaving woes.
 But, wise as piteous, you rebuke me well,
 And I will strive this agony to quell."
 With effort he choked down a rising sigh,
 And dashed the starting tear from either eye,
 And soon resumed the dull and vacant calm,
 Like ocean after tempest's wild alarm.
 Once more that white and weakly outstretched hand
 Sought his ; and her wild eyes, once soft and bland,
 With a deep-searching glance is on him bent
 In grateful and in piteous intent.
 Her pale lips move, and a faint sound, scarce heard,
 The death-like silence of the chamber stirred.
 "Poor Roland !" and he bends to her to press
 On that pale hand a brotherly caress.
 Her other arm around his neck doth twine,
 And thankful, loving tears bedew her eyne.
 "Loyal and loving from the first to last ;
 True now ; as kind and tender in the past.
 While power to thank you lasts, Oh ! let me speak
 My thanks ; but, Oh ! to speak those words are weak !
 Willing to yield that which you most desired,
 For others' good more than your own inspired.
 To me *your secret* has been ever known,
 And now you must be left alone, alone.

Oh ! let me bless you with my dying breath,
 Sweet soother of all sorrows. Welcome, Death !"
 With broken, faltering accents, oft between,
 A lengthened pause, and gasp for breath had been.
 Exhausted now, she sinks, and prostrate lies,
 With parted lips and dimming upturned eyes.
 Quick-coming breath and feebling thoughts astray
 Through the past joy and sorrow far away.
 Now forward steps from out the silent throng,
 Where in the shadow he had lingered long,
 A grave, bald-headed priest, with snowy beard,
 Where reverence and benignity appeared.
 With solemn gesture waves them from the room :
 " Leave me, my children ; for the time has come
 The last and holy office to console,
 And speed our dying sister's passing soul.
 Brief time, I fear ; but precious moments count
 In Mercy's reckoning, like years' amount.
 I will recall you when my task is done.
 Meantime, your prayers, each and every one."
 Intruding eye nor thought must seek to pry
 On the last solemn, sacred mystery
 That yields a human soul, purged of earth's stain,
 To its immortal Master's hands again.
 Draw we the veil—and leave the priest and maid
 To sacred privacy—" And pray God aid !"

The shrift is o'er, recalled the mourning train.
 Alas ! few fleeting moments now remain.
 The thread of life unwound to its last strand,
 The spirit fluttering on the borderland
 Of life and death, what still is Rosalind,
 Unconsciously, in seeming death reclined.
 Roland bent over her deject and lorn,
 Anxiously watches, inwardly doth mourn ;
 When suddenly, as though some heavenly quire
 Far distant raised, to the celestial lyre,
 An invocation soft for soothing woes,
 A whispered sweetness in the chamber rose—
 So sorrowfully low, so dulcet, smooth,
 The sphere-like echoes of celestial love,
 So plaintively subdued the balanced sound,
 As though some wandering zephyr wailed around.
 It was a sweet-set psalm for passing sprite
 To waft it hymn-borne to the realms of light.
 While yet the entrancing melodies arise,
 Slowly re-open Rosaline's closèd eyes.
 Up-gazing, and with eager arms outspread.
 Partly uprising from her pillowed bed,
 Radiant her face, her lips pronounced one word,
 " Walter !" then backward fell, and no more stirred.

In a green quiet nook 'neath alder's shade,
 In peaceful "Vale of Rest" they 'earth the maid.
 The office over, and the turf relaid,
 Sad Roland at the convent only stayed
 To raise a cross and thank the sisters kind
 Much for himself, but more for Rosalind.
 Then bade farewell to them, and went his way—
 To what? Perchance you'll learn some other day.

* * * *

One sure thing is—whate'er the strife,
 Or what the happiness of life—
 The dogged march of Time doth tend
 All strife or joy to bring to end.
 This verity doth bare to view
 Comfort, and admonition, too—
 The one, all helpful effort made
 To brunt the evil that hath weighed,
 Be the oppression ne'er so vast,
 Time's help will lighten it at last;
 The other, it may skill to learn,
 Life's joys to noblest purpose turn;
 For Time doth fix a stubborn bourne,
 From which there is no back return.
 And Time hath surely glided on
 In steady, unrelaxing run.
 How long, it little doth avail,
 And little imports to our tale.
 Only when last the lay I sung
 The world looked green and fresh and young;
 The skies were bright, the sun was strong;
 The nights were short, the days were long.
 The grass was lush, the boughs bent down
 Beneath their leafy-burden crown;
 The air was soft, and bland, and warm,
 Gaudy with flowers and sweet with balm;
 The birds flew high, or in the shade
 A constant feast of carol made;
 The distance soft with gauzy grey,
 The weald with sheen and shadows gay;
 The gala season of the year
 When all was life and all was cheer.
 But now the world showed shrunk and cold,
 And blear and bald, and shrivelled, old,
 In ragged robe of mantling snow,
 Its frozen members peeping through.
 The bitter, driving, wintry grain
 Pelted with hail, and sleet, and rain;
 But where it fell the frosty bise*
 Condensed it soon to glittering ice;

* North-east wind.

Clinking and dangling like a weird,
 And shivering elders' matted beard.
 The earth was hard and baked in frost,
 The streams dry-footed may be crossed;
 Sounds travel quick, and, to the ear,
 Though distant sent, yet seeming near.
 The sky is dull, and mat, and bleak,
 And even as an o'erhung reek.
 Nature is Winter's shackled thrall,
 Swathed in her mortal rimey pall.
 Thus was the outward world arrayed :
 Be now another scene displayed.

An antique room, of gloomy style,
 Within a beetling castle pile,
 With heavy rough-carved oaken beams,
 And deep-set lattice, where the gleams
 Of the dim outward light had much ado ;
 The dust-beclouded vitrage to peep through ;
 But the faint, struggling daylight haze
 Is stifled by the ardent blaze
 From a wide hearth, where glowing logs,
 Guarded by quaint-formed iron dogs,
 Send up a roaring, crackling sound,
 And light the chamber all around
 With a bright, crimson blood-like low,
 Which danced and frickered to and fro,
 On arrass'd walls and trophied mail
 And chiseled oak and stone detail,
 And faded banners whose device
 To tell its legends scarce suffice ;
 And in the billet's fullest glare,
 Deep-seated in a high-backed chair,
 His elbow on the table's plane ;
 His crisping fingers doth sustain
 His head, whose dark and ebon glow
 Of elf-locks thickly cloud his brow.
 A form in deep, abstracted mood
 Doth wildly glare and darkly brood
 Into the glowing ingle's haze,
 With eyes where madness seems to blaze.
 A marked confusion in the room
 Stands out through all the glare and gloom ;
 In every seat or corner strewn
 Some object in disorder thrown ;
 Of raiment or accoutrement
 Incongruously are besprent.
 Viands untouched, the table spread,
 Denote the gustful impulse fled ;
 But crowds of empty wine-flasks tell
 Of fatal, maddening bent too well.

At last a sharp, convulsive throe
 Appears to break his brooding through,
 As a deep, painful groan breaks forth,
 Part agony and partly wrath ;
 His hands are wildly upward thrown,
 Then clenched, and on his brow pressed down,
 As though to lull some qualm of pain
 That throbbed within his restless brain:
 "Accursed phantoms ! will ye keep
 Your ghastly guard to banish sleep ?
 Cannot the deep-drained Lethean draft,
 So often poured, so wildly quaff'd,
 Dull down the constant haunting thought
 Of what my madd'ning passion wrought ?
 One spectre-thought ! one spectre-sight !
 At hearth by day and couch by night !
Her wan reproach, *his* dying gaze,
 Or the survivors' eyes ablaze,
 Which seem to watch and wait, but ne'er
 Relax their keen and vengeful stare !
 Oh, for a respite, long and deep,
 Of blank, oblivious, heavy sleep !
 No past remembered, present known,
 Nor future's darkening shadow shown :
 A shadow, aye, more threatening dark
 With mocking smile or menace stark.
 Am I the same who once did reign
 Supreme and blithe o'er this domain ;
 Who sought the seeker's free advance,
 And led the crowd in chase or dance ;
 Where mirth, or life, or revel ran,
 The foremost, cheeriest, happiest man ?
 Now the near sound of other's lip
 Doth jar, and chill, and seem to clip
 My heart as with a grasp of ice,
 So guilt doth infant cowardice !
 Silent I come, in silence go,
 My halls and deep-hushed chambers through,
 And my retainers every one
 Learned by my mood my path to shun.
 Gloom grown around me like a shroud,
 And folds me like a sable cloud.
 Weariness wastes and thought consumes,
 And ever thè one theme resumes ;
 A nightmare memory, a waking spell,
 Circling me in its influence fell.
 My senses into traitors turn,
 And me with their delusions spurn.
 My sight with phantom forms is mock'd,
 My ears by sounds derisive shock'd ;
 Ever my nostrils scent of blood—
 'Tis mixed with drink, it taints my food.

Ever and everywhere I feel
 The unknown peril round me steal ;
 An atmosphere appears to wreath
 Me round, too dense and hard to breathe ;
 Which presses with a constant strain
 To madden and to crush my brain."
 He with an angry start doth rise,
 And glares around with rolling eyes—
 A gleam of anger and dismay
 Like a wild beast that stands at bay.
 "I stifle ! and a fancy strong,
 A prompting whim, hath held me long—
 A luring impulse to review
 Those scenes whose memory I rue.
 Its force resistless I in vain
 Strive with; it e'er assails again,
 As did the rock the Pythian roll,
 But to recoil and crush his soul.
 Why view that clairière again
 Where I first crossed the bridal train ;
 Where, dazzled by her beauty's spell,
 I nursed the promptings sent from hell ?
 Oh ! did her sad reproachful shade
 Appear as then appear'd the maid,
 With youth's soft flush and modest glow,
 Life mantling lip, and cheek, and brow,
 I could endure, adore, and gaze
 Through haunting vision's painful haze !
 But no ! the death-fixed scornful stare,
 So freezing, yet as bright as e'er,
 Speaks from the grave ! I feel, I know,
 'Tis with the dead I have to do."

A laboured groan of suffering breaks
 Forth from his breast, and plainly speaks
 Remorse deep-seated, and a mind
 Whose mem'ry no relief can find ;
 With nervous hand to seize the thong,
 To sound the high-suspended gong :
 Then a deep echo's solemn boom
 Breaks through the silent lonely room.
 Shortly the portal open stands ;
 His henchman waits his high commands.
 "Saddle the roan which late I rode ;
 I weary of my close abode."
 Surprised, he said : "You may not know,
 My lord, 'tis eve, and threats for snow."
 For answer he but only gave
 His hand a short impatient wave,
 As though to say : "My bidding do ;
 T'obey is quite enough for you."
 Then bowing low, La Rouse withdrew.

Some hasty alterations made
 From how he lately was arrayed—
 A weather mantle lined with furs,
 Gauntlets, and toque, and boots, and spurs.
 His unclasped tunic now made fast,
 A rapier in his girdle pass'd,
 A riding whip and horn of call ;
 And thus he passes from the hall,
 And onward to the drawbridge gate,
 Where the blood roan doth for him wait.
 Silent he mounts, as one who dreams,
 Or rather like a statue seems ;
 His look so blank, far off, and dim,
 All present things seem lost to him.
 Soon, as his courser feels his weight,
 It bounds across the drawbridge straight,
 And out into the biting blast
 Fleet as a flying shadow pass'd.
 But the steep, downward zigzag pent
 Check to his mettled impulse lent,
 And brings him up from headlong race,
 Into a gentle, ambling pace.
 The grooms and the retainers gaze
 After him, through the evening haze,
 In stupor, in which silence told
 Far more than words could e'er unfold :
 Some side looks pass, but none doth speak,
 Shrinking the silent bode to break ;
 Some brows are bent, some heads are shaken ;
 As silently by each his way is taken.

On speeds the baron on his way ;
 The gleams of fast declining day,
 Low on the dim horizon blue,
 In streaks and gaps the glare breaks through,
 In fiery streams betipped with gold,
 And floods the stripped and rimey wold
 With bosks of pinky-orange, made
 Still more intense by depths of shade.
 Where east and west the alleys go
 The freest spreads the unlet glow ;
 Where north and south the alleys sweep,
 Light flushes half, half umbrage deep ;
 Which flit, and change, and dwindle quite,
 As sinks the mighty master-light :
 Then the bright cressets in the sky
 Grow sickly and dim out and die ;
 Grey yields to blue, blue sinks to darkness drear,
 The day is dead, and gloomy night is here.

* * * * *

Yes, once before, young in our tale,
 We've seen this winding forest vale ;

There, where the bare and frosted oak
 Hangs o'er the bridle-path, awoke
 The distant twittering refrain
 Of the enlivening musett's strain ;
 And the hale sound of simple song
 Which cheered the bridal guests along.
 I see the cheery pageant wend ;
 I hear the leafy vista send
 The echoes of their laughter back
 Along the sunny summer track ;
 I see the wreaths and favours bright
 Glow in the rosy morning light ;
 I hear the bugle's ringing bray,
 I see the stag scud o'er the way ;
 The hounds, the hunters, and the train—
 One chiefly, who has tightened rein :
 There where I point—is it the light
 Now dying out that cheats my sight ?
 He's halted on the self-same spot !
 I know him, and he sees me not.
 My cloak of darkness put I on,
 And be invisible anon.
 What other means to me avail,
 To learn the ending of this tale ;
 For the dim misty legend broke
 Where I commence this after-stroke ?

“ Come on ! I know ye well, *all three* ;
 The *others* but as shadows be.
 I know this place, this sylvan range,
 Although from then till now the change
 Is great as any change can be,
 Save what may be remarked in me,
 Or greater still the change in ye !
 Then all was sunny, blithe, and bright ;
 Now all is bare and dismal night :
 Then *ye* were fresh, and fair, and hale,
 Now ghastly stark and deadly pale ;
 Save *this*, and well I know that *he*
 Is but a live man's effigy.
 Send hence these other shadowy few ;
 My only question is with you.
 So best ! These grooms and bridesmaids rude,
 Their shadowy presence did intrude,
 And gazed on with the wonder shown
 By list'ners to a tongue unknown.
 They've vanished in the gloom of night,
 Gone from the sound, lost from the sight ;
 And now for *ye* ! It doth appear
 This night *ye've willed* my presence here.
 The spell so strongly on me lay
 I was perforce constrain'd t'obey.

I felt this ghostly *cortège* might
 Be met with in the glade to-night.
 I felt the deep guilt I have wrought,
 Being remorse and misery-taught,
 Might be bought off could I but ask
 From you some penal penance-task.
 No longer can I bear the strain
 Of throbbing nerve and burning brain,
 The constant sleepless miseries
 Borne from those ever death-fixed eyes,
 Bent on me through the pain-drawn space
 Of time, with no relenting trace.
 If to repent can pardon win,
 Or deep contrition buy out sin,
 Bear witness, all my throes and smart
 Of mind and body, brain and heart,
 I can long-suffering title show
 For mercy's light to glimmer through !
 Still, those blank looks ? And not a sign
 Within your unrelenting eyne !
 See ye not ? Hear ye not what's said,
 Ye justly stern, relentless dead ?
 For *he* that *other shade*, I know,
 Is of the living but the show !
 I fear not him ! Come time, I hope
 With mortal foeman I dare cope ;
 And, though I feel in open day
 He means not his account to pay,
 'Tis not the dread of mortal might
 That can concern me, nor affright.
 Why speak ye not ? Why make no sign ?
 Why fix me with those speaking eyne ?
 Is truth, then, in my rising fear
 That *I alone* am present here,
 That *ye* are antics of the brain,
 And all is but delusion's train ?
 Sternly the wild conviction grows
 Which must in madness find its close.
 Thou ghostly yeoman, dost *thou* smile,
 Though *she* looks sadder than erewhile ?
 Thy brow with wrathful wreak still bent,
 While pity's light to hers is lent.
 A saintly glow, a mercy-spark,
 Shines from her eyes to light the dark
 And cheerless gloom within my soul,
 And bid Despair's clouds backward roll.
 If this be madness, 'tis more bless'd
 Than sanity could be at best !
 Pardon'd by *thee* ! Oh ! do not fade
 Without the sign of pardon made.
 What stretch you forth ? The holy rood !
 Thanks ! thanks ! The symbol's understood !

A mountain's weight has left my breast !
 She's gone ! But she has left me rest.
 Now I am yours, ye sterner two ;
 E'en what ye would I'm fain to do.
 Ye point in spectral commands
 Towards the east your phantom hands.
 I guess your drift, I read your eyes ;
 That way your blasted farmstead lies,
 Know ye, by some strange impulse bent,
 To visit it was my intent ?
 And one more scene of darker bode
 Down yonder in the nightly wood.
 I feel drawn on by some strong power
 To view those fatal scenes once more.
 Ye smile ! Be what the meaning may,
 'To follow ye I'll not delay.
 Lead on ! I'm eager more and more
 'To have the ghastly ordeal o'er,"

As following his ghostly guides,
 Slowly towards the east he rides,
 With head bowed down and moody air ;
 And, following after, let us fare.

'The snow comes down. 'Tis now full night ;
 The heavens show not a heavenly light ;
 Yet do the mantling wreaths of snow
 Dimly surrounding objects show :
 Black ruins, capp'd with fleecy trim,
 Loom through the dulness, wild and grlm,
 Silent and tortuous, cold and bare,
 'Type of a broken heart's despair.
 Around, some sylvan giants rise,
 Gnarled and weird against the skies,
 In skeleton and spectral state,
 Grim guardians of the desolate.
 Stands out the frosted fields across,
 The silhouette of man and horse,
 A statue-like, a fixed shade,
 But darker 'gainst the dimness made.
 Heedless of driving wind and snow,
 No sense of storm they seem to know ;
 But shortly on the biting blast
 Some muttered sounds are hurried past.
 " Yes ; ruin ! desolation ! wreck !
 Passion or fire doth nothing check !
 Why keep me here ? Think you I care
 On scorched and blighted walls to stare ?
 Though by enforcement I have come
 To prowl around this broken home,
 Brief view suffices me to weet
 Your wrongs how wild and how complete.

Cease to point out that blacken'd pile,
 Relax your cold, revengeful smile,
 And let the last dread trial come,
 Although it leads to death and doom.
 Wait you that *other* who but now
 Left us with dark and bodeful brow ?
 He will not come, full well I know ;
 He hath another task to do.
 But 'tis not *he*—'tis *thou*, 'tis *thou*—
 I have to bide and answer now.
 I know not, have no power to guess,
 The period of my distress,
 Or, if my shatter'd thoughts can last,
 To face again the fearful past ;
 But, whatsoever horrors teem,
 I must go through, as in a dream,
 Powerless, resistless, overborne
 By fateful force, to bear and mourn.
 Thou turn'st away, and takest the gate
 To that dern, shadowy vale of fate,
 Whose direful memories sanguine train
 Sends fiery tremor through my brain.
 Speed on ! Speed on ! No time for thought,
 Or I shall be—nay, *am*—distraught !"
 With a loud peal of laughter dire,
 With gestures wild and eyes on fire,
 He goads his plunging courser's sides,
 And off into the darkness rides,
 In rapid, reckless, headlong speed,
 Urging the staunch and mettled steed,
 As in the mad pursuit of one
 He deemed to lead and draw him on.
 Through broken ways, down hollows steep ;
 Through snowdrifts, and through streams breast deep ;
 Now up, now down, and in and out,
 With many a loud and frantic shout
 Of " Onward ! Onward !" laugh and yell,
 Wildly towards the darksome dell,
 The startled steed, possessed by fear,
 Broke madly into wild career,
 And skirred the snowy glades along,
 With unlet ire the drifts among ;
 With flashing hoofs along the way,
 Scatt'ring in clouds the fleecy spray ;
 With laugh, and bound, and yell, and stride,
 The horse and rider well divide
 The frantic course, and seem to vie
 As rivals in insanity ;
 Till reached that glade where Walter fell,
 When a fleet form darts from the dell,
 And shoots like lightning right across
 The pathway of the flying horse,

Which swerves, and staggers, then bounds on ;
 But its wild rider's course was done.
 Three rapid circles round his head,
 The foeman whirl'd the lin'd lead,
 Then launched the hissing circling line,
 Which coiled him in its close entwine ;
 Then one strong, vigorous tug, and lo !
 The baron lies along the snow.
 The stranger springs with a swift bound
 To press him to the frozen ground,
 With knee relentlessly compressed
 Upon his wildly panting breast,
 While quick as thought around his wrists
 A strong, tough, slender cord he twists,
 And binds and knots and makes full fast,
 Nor speaks till then, and then " At last !"
 Draws a deep-chested breath to ease
 His breast, and rises from his knees.
 He is, a man of awsome show :
 His wild hair matted on his brow,
 Elf-like and roughly straggling grey,
 Over his shoulders far away ;
 Fierce and hirsute his grizzled beard,
 And a strange eye, well to be feared ;
 Dull, tattered weeds of doubtful tint ;
 A hunting knife, with many a dint,
 Swings from a leathern belt, *sans gain*,*
 Which doth a deer-skin jerkin strain ;
 His hair-grown breast and arms are bare ;
 His legs, too, to the knees ; and there
 Some coarse and dingy cloth is bound
 With raw-hide lacings round and round,
 From knee to tapering ankle doon,
 And ended by a sandal shoon.
 Stunned by his fall, the Baron lies
 With gasping mouth and clos'd eyes ;
 While from his belt his foe unswung
 A coil of twisted leathern thong,
 Lashing his ankles close and tight,
 Not to be loosed, do what he might ;
 Untwined the lanier which had laced,
 And cool'd him, in its might embraced ;
 And twines its end, when it is loose,
 Into an easy running noose ;
 Then looks around to note the place,
 As well as darkness left the trace ;
 When his whole aspect fiercer grows,
 As shaken by strong passion throes.
 " Ah ! vengeful Fate ! This very glen
 I see and recognise, as when

* Scabbard.

I found my brother, where he fell.
 By many signs I know it well.
 Beneath that tree—whose drooping bough
 May serve my task of vengeance now—
 He lay. No chance was that strong might
 That seemed to will me here to-night.
 It was my *destiny*, his *doom*,
 That fated both to hither come.
 Was it thy voice, my brother dear,
 That from the grave commanded here,
 And seemed in words of fire to say :
 ‘ Your oath ! your oath ! No more delay ;
 Re-seek the spot where I was slain !
 Renew the covenant again !
 That may betide, may show you how
 To ratify the brother’s vow.’
 It shall be kept ! That spreading bough
 Sways o’er the spot where you laid low
 In bloody death ; there shall he sway,
 His debt of crime and blood to pay.”
 The Baron’s lips gave forth a sound,
 His eyes unclosed and stare around,
 Surprised to find the tightened bands
 Compress his legs and bind his hands.
 Wildly he raves, and seeks to rise,
 On fancied grooms and vassals’ cries,
 Struggling with effort to his seat ;
 And then his eyes and Roland’s meet—
 His ravings suddenly subside ;
 His blood-shot eyes are staring wide,
 With a dread, meaning glance of awe,
 As understanding all they saw.
 The lengthened silence grows to pain ;
 Both with a settled glare remain,
 Spelling the other with an eye
 Of strained and fearful fixity.
 At length, in awful under-breath,
 The prostrate Baron whispereth :
 “ Thou ! thou again ! Or rather no ;
 Thou’rt not that silent threat’ning show
 That ever dumbly hovered by :
 I know thou art reality !
 Thy purpose is —— ” “ What should it be ?
 Who am I, thinkest thou ? Let me learn.
 Canst thou in this wild mien discern
 Roland, your yeoman, leal and true,
 Whose brother cowardly you slew ?
 Which to avenge, in this same glade,
 I fearful oath of vengeance made.
 Thy hour is come, thy end prepared ;
 Hope not from justice to be spared.
 The Fates that guilty souls pursue

To your just doom have hurried you ;
 And I ordained by Fate's decree
 Thy doomster merciless to be."
 "Well, do thy will," he makes reply,
 Indifferent, and abstractedly.
 "Think'st thou I'll plead with thee to gain
 A lengthening out of life and pain ?
 Yet will I crave one boon of thee,
 In name of Christian charity.
 Thou canst not wish my soul's deep loss ;
 My sword for guard doth bear a cross :
 Draw it for me, and let me there
 Breathe forth my penitence in prayer ;
 Then turn its point upon my breast,
 Strike home, and both shall be at rest."
 In silence Roland draws the sword,
 And sticks it, without spoken word,
 Right up before the Baron's face,
 And leaves him to his act of grace ;
 While to the tree his way he takes,
 And ghastly preparation makes ;
 Which to describe I am not fain,
 Nor all the dread details of pain—
 Revenge's ire, remorse's throes,
 Which lead up to my story's close.
 Let misty time obscure their dread,
 And fancy stand in diction's stead.

Only thus much. The warders wait,
 Expectant at the castle gate,
 Through the long night ; and, wond'ring, watch,
 Their lord's returning form to catch.
 And wonder soon became alarm,
 Boding of some befallen harm :
 Commotion spread ; all were alert ;
 But nought befel which might divert
 The rising apprehensive dread,
 That through the gen'ral throng was spread.
 At dawn Le Rouse outriders sent,
 On searching and inquiry bent.
 One anxious troop excursion made
 Thorough the fatal wintry glade ;
 And there, in consternation's glow,
 Beheld, suspended from a bough,
 Their lord, stark-dead, and dangling-hung
 Up by a stringent leathern thong,
 And on a scroll these words expressed,
 "*Lex Talionis*," on his breast.

Next morn a monk, on pious mission bound
 To the "God's Acre" of his convent, found,

Stretched on a snow-clad grave, all stiff and wan,
 The corse of a strange, wildly-clothed man.
 Turning him o'er, and kneeling down to trace
 The lineaments of the cold-frozen face,
 Long did he gaze, uncertain and aghast ;
 Then murmured : "Roland ! It has come at last !
 Unhappy son ! thy secret have I kept ;
 Thy hapless brother's untimed death bewept.
One heart ! one love ! one wish ! and that to have—
 And thou *shalt* have that wish—*one common grave.*"

THE TWO ROADS OF LIFE.

A MORAL OF NEW YEAR'S EVE.

Translated from the German of JEAN PAUL by MADAME GUIZOT
 (PAULINE MEULAN). *Versified from the French by T. M.*

'Twas late ; 'twas New Year's Eve, and the old year
 Was in its death throes ; while the young one stood
 Expectant at the portal to march in,
 Gay-garlanded and flush with rosy youth,
 To take the dead year's place. One lonely form,
 A man by sixty winters grizzled o'er,
 Stood solitary in the silent night.
 With mournful and dejected air he raised
 His eyes towards the star-bespangled sky,
 Where, like an azure lake, thickly besprent
 With glowing waterlilies, floated there,
 Those flowers of heaven, a brilliant twinkling throng.
 From contemplation of their glory, then
 He cast his gaze down to the sombre earth,
 On which no soul so destitute as he
 Of every joy or rest ; for at the foot
 Of the dun hill-side he was standing on,
 His tomb, like a dark gulf awaited him.
 Already sixty steps adown the pent
 He had descended, bearing with him naught
 Of the fair promise of his youth and life
 But errors and remorse. His health destroyed,
 Empty his soul, dejected and oppressed,
 Repentance pinched his heart, his age chagrin.
 His early days again before him pass,
 And he recalls the solemn moments back
 When by a father's guidance he was led
 To the two roads of life : the one that led
 Into a tranquil and a happy land,

Waving with fertile harvests, glowing bright,
 With constant sunlight and an air of balm,
 And musical with Nature's melodies ;
 The other, winding through a pass of gloom,
 A cavern, hideous and issueless,
 Distilling poison and with serpents rife.
 Left to himself, alas ! which chose the youth ?
 His present plight may answer. Even now
 The serpents gnaw his heart ; the poison's sting
 Blisters his lips, and rankles in his blood.
 He now can realise his fatal choice.
 He casts his eyes to heaven : with outstretched arms
 And cramping fingers, he exclaims aloud,
 With anguish inexpressible : " Oh, youth,
 Return ! Oh, thou my father ! once again
 Give me the choice of the two roads of life,
 That I may choose aright ! " But youth nor sire
 Was longer there. He sees the wild fires dance
 And disappear around the dismal swamp,
 And cries aloud : " Behold my folly's days ! "
 He sees a meteor shoot adown the sky,
 Flicker and vanish. " Lo, my emblem there ! "
 He cries in anguish, and the eager goad
 Of sharp repentance pierces deeper still.
 Then in his thoughts he essays to retrace
 The men who, once companions of his youth,
 Now scattered in the world, fulfil the task
 Of honoured fathers, friends of virtue, truth,
 Passing delightedly, with tearless eyes,
 This festal New Year's Eve. The sound of bells,
 To celebrate the new-born heir of Time,
 Breaks from the steeples, and salutes his ear
 As with a pious chant, recalling friends,
 Fond parents, and the loving hopes they formed
 For him years long ago ; their counsel, wishes,
 Wishes all unaccomplished, hopes betrayed,
 Counsel unfollowed ! With remorse and shame
 Cast down, no longer dare he turn his eyes
 To their bright dwelling place ; they seek the ground ;
 The bitter tears burst forth ; the snow-clad soil
 Receives them ; disconsolate he cries,
 " Return, bright youth ! Return thou once again ! "

With a sharp spasm he awoke from sleep :
 His age, his misery, were but a dream ;
 His errors only were reality.
 Truth and new life were open to him still.
 He had not travelled the false path of ill
 Too far to bar return. He clasped his hands
 In fervent thankfulness, and made resolve
 To leave the evil for the better route.
 Just then the merry New Year bells rung out

Their joyous carillon. With eager ear,
 Hailing them as a happy augury,
 He listened to their chimes : " Hail, cheerful bells !
 There's hope and rescue in your melody.
 A New Year tokens a new life for me !

SUPERSTITION.

BANE of the earth, the growth of craft and fear !
 Thine was the primal curse that fell on man,
 That, like the blighting canker in the ear,
 Hath choked the harvest with its noxious ban.
 Thy germs deep striking in the early soil,
 The flaunting poison-flower's pernicious show
 Seductive rose, and its rank tendrils coil,
 Strangled the young desire to truly know.

In its unwholesome range, the pure air grew
 Tainted with venom, that delusions bred,
 In which the impossible appeared as true,
 And dotage followed where deception led ;
 And blind belief in creeds, confused and wild,
 Possessed the victims of the baleful spell ;
 And mockeries and mysteries beguiled
 The stunted reason, with distractions fell.

Vast crude distortions of their unknown selves,
 With all the evil in them magnified,
 Foul monsters, reptiles, nondescripts, and elves,
 Mankind intoxicate hath deified ;
 And to abominable mummeries rites
 The human generations have bowed down,
 The willing dupes of sacerdotal sleights,
 In each incongruous creed the world hath known.

Its frenzy hath engendered that blind ire
 In which atrocity was sacred deemed ;
 Fostered fell moody hate and passion's dire,
 And a belief that all save they blasphemed.
 Each mad hallucination was the true,
 For all who differed, steel, or cord, or flame,
 So did the holy lunacy imbue
 With fiend-like fury, in devotion's name.

Its fierce dissensions, prodigal in blood,
 Hath made the earth one ghastly battle ground ;
 And certain evil strove for fancied good,
 With malice, but in creed-wrought passion found ;

By woe and pain, demoniac zealots thought
 Some shadowy bliss the future would secure,
 And to inflict or suffer, safely bought
 To some fool's paradise the passport sure.

Long hath the virulent delirium reigned,
 And reason's science vainly sought its cure,
 Although some slow success it hath attained,
 To mitigate the evils men endure;
 Who from the remedy with sickly fright
 Infatuate turn, to nurse their malady.
 Convinced who else are wrong, they're in the right,
 And all beliefs but theirs absurdity.

Oh, Reason ! let thy disabusive power,
 And Knowledge, with thy searching, trying test,
 Dispel the cloud that murky doth lower
 O'er minds with superstition's bane oppress'd,
 That the grim terror of perpetual woe,
 Or the monotony of endless bliss,
 Divert not from the wish all truth to know,
 Nor thought of other state empoison this.

SONG.

WHY, what the Devil ails me? Eh day ! Eh day !
 I've had these cursed low spirits hanging on me
 This fortnight now—yes, ever since last May-day,
 When at the dance Peg Bolton smiled upon me ;
 But then she smiled on I don't know how many,
 And danced with Bill and Tom and Jack and Harry.
 But, 'pon my soul, I don't remember any
 Girl that can dance so light or laugh so merry.
 But what the Devil ails me? Eh day ! Eh day !
 I've had these cursed blue devils since last May-day.

I can't tell why I'm thinking all day, all day,
 About Peg Bolton ; and last night I dreamed, too,
 That round my bed she came, and danced where I lay ;
 How her lips mocked me ; how her blue eyes beamed too ;
 Her foot and leg—neater, no shoe nor stocking
 Was ever drawn upon—she tripp'd so lightly.
 Such dreams are most confoundedly provoking ;
 But I should like to have the same dreams nightly.
 Plague take it, what's the matter? Oh, dear ! Oh, dear !
 I never in my whole life did feel so queer.

There's something wrong about me. Bother ! bother !

To eat, drink, sleep, or work's out of the question.

My brain and breast are in a pretty pother :

'Tis either caused by love or indigestion.

Yes, I can't cheat myself about it either,

Sweet Peggy Bolton's smiles and ways so winning—

Have toss'd my heart about like a duck's feather,

And set my head like a tectotum spinning ;

And surely as the Devil is in London,

If she won't marry me, I'm dished and undone.

THE SHADOW OF A CLOUD.

LIFE's all a lie ! or, rather, not life's self,
 For that is made of stern reality ;
 But the deceptive garb it pranks in is
 Illusive as the mirage of the waste ;
 And men who have found out the bitter cheat
 Continue still to falsely palm it off
 Upon the inexperienced. Romance,
 Bright-Paradisal-hued and fairy-trimm'd,
 Envelopes the swart surface of the world
 With an unwholesome halo, like a fog
 Rising from rotten, reptile-teeming swamps
 Under a gaudy sunrise, and, though death
 And fell contagion may ride forth with it,
 Looks rainbow-like and falsely beautiful.
 Behold that gaunt and sallow-visaged thing,
 Threadbare and grizzled, though not past his prime.
 He is a coiner of that fair untruth
 That in the breast of unsophisticate
 And eager youth makes the heart nimbly leap.
 He's called a poet, novelist—what not ?
 His fast is yet unbroken, and he writes
 Of banquets, feasts, and sumptuous profusion.
 His walls are bare and weather-stained, and he
 Scribbles of arras-tapestried boudoirs.
 His hearth is emberless, but yule logs blaze
 Upon his pages ; loveless is his home,
 But he pens raptures for ideal lips ;
 He raves of shadowy bowers and sungilt hills ;
 And from his dusty garret window looks
 On reeking chimneys and a city's smoke.
 All the bright things he pictures, in himself
 Have their antithesis ; yet fools will still
 Watch for and chase the bubbles which he blows ;
 Think them Elysian orbs, and barter time, [what ?
 Health, sleep, to catch them ; and when caught, they're—
 False, hollow cheats, composed of next to naught,
 And what there is, unclean.—*Author's own ?*

LINES WRITTEN IN A LITERARY ALBUM.

THE foil for beauty is a homely mien,
 And lights by shadow's contrast best are seen ;
 The view of close succeeding objects bright
 Create satiety and pall the sight.
 Thence the art dilletante doth assuage
 Surcharge of colour with a neutral page.
 So by some measured platitudes ranged here,
 Adjacent heights more salient may appear.
 The broad, bol'd tree gains both in belt and height,
 By the proximity of saplings, light.
 And the heaven-piercing spire is taller made
 By huts that shelter in its holy shade.
 The brilliant-tinted flowers have richer tone
 When margined by a sad harmonious zone ;
 And Shakespeare says, "The gem more brightness bears
 That sparkles in the swarthy Ethiop's ears."
 No effort of the judgment need this cost,
 No tax on admiration, but at most
 A span of rest, an interval of ease ;
 Then on to following raptures when you please.

MY PEBBLE BOX.

WANDERING upon the shingle beach
 With rattling wave-washed pebbles strewn,
 Those mentors that dumb sermons preach
 To choral wavelets anthem-moan.
 Among the petr'ous chaos some
 Have struck me by their form or hue,
 I've pouched them and convey'd them home,
 And kept them for an after view.
 Though valueless to other thought,
 They had an interest to my eye,
 Which at the first my fancy caught,
 And next became a vanity.
 I knew they were not gems of price,
 But splinters of an earthly sphere.
 If quaint, from chance, and not device—
 The chance of ocean's wear and tear.
 I've culled them from confusion's pack,
 Classed them as best my judgment might ;
 Then wherefore should I cast them back,
 Or hide them from my fellow's sight ?
 If valueless, they're harmless toys,
 That vacant moments have beguiled ;
 And, failing deep intenser joys,
 I am content with pleasures mild.

ERRATA.

PAGE.	VERSE.	LINE.	
3	4	28	"Might tell I once had been."
3	4	29	"Murky tidal line "
3	4	31	"That haply in hereafter."
15	—	14	for "wherever burns" read "where ever burns."
16	—	7	from bottom of page, for "bows" read "boughs."
21	—	23	for "At" read "As."
33	2	30	for "difference" read "deference."
34	—	8	for "bespent" read "besprent."
40	—	15	for "hide" read "bide."
51	1	8	for "unmasked" read "unmarked."
69	—	last	for "some time" read "sometime."
70	—	17	for "love inspired" read "love-inspired."
77	2	21	for "frame" read "flame."
80	2	7	for "decay" read "delay."
85	—	26	for "full" read "fell."
88	—	1	"from out the sunken pit, his beetling brow," not.
89	4	31	for "feekless" read "feckless."
105	3	35	for "mock" read "evoke."
162	7	41	for "hide" read "bide."
167	6	34	for "difference" read "deference."
170	3	18	for "patron" read "patroness."
170	4	19	for "man" read "mankind."
170	5	33	for "a" read "all."
173	—	3	from bottom, for "murrin" read "murrain."
191	2	20	for "Empress" read "Imperatrice."
203	—	2	from bottom, for "sell" read "selle."



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